



Merseyside
**FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE**

Statement of Assurance

2012/13



**SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES; SAFE
EFFECTIVE FIREFIGHTERS**

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Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2012/13

CONTENTS

1. Foreword	Page 2
2. Introduction	2
3. Governance Arrangements	3
4. Overview of MFRS	5
5. The risks we face in Merseyside	7
6. Risks beyond our borders	8
7. Our Services to the Community	8
8. Our Performance	10
9. Financial Performance	11
10. Our Future Plans	12
11. Glossary of Terms	14

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2012/13

1. Foreword

Fire and Rescue Authorities are accountable for their performance and as such, information regarding effectiveness and value for money should be accessible, transparent and accurately reported to the communities they serve. Along with legislation which governs how FRA's provide their services, the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#) requires Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) to produce this Annual Statement of Assurance.

The aim of this Statement of Assurance is **'to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.'**

DCLG Guidance on Statements of Assurance for FRA's in England'

Merseyside FRS has faced budget cuts on an unprecedented scale over the course of the Comprehensive Spending Review. These cuts have had a significant impact on organisational capacity and have resulted in a 33% reduction in available appliances (from 42 to 28). This will have an impact on the speed and weight of attack when responding to incidents and in the ability of the Service to maintain the levels of community safety intervention delivered over the last decade. Whilst the Service will continue to deliver excellent standards of response it will not be at the levels delivered prior to the cuts.

We hope that you find this Statement of Assurance useful. It is intended to direct reader to other published reports, rather than repeating existing material and as a result it contains several hyperlinks. If you require copies of any documents or have any comments or questions please contact Jackie Sutton – Integrated Risk Management Planning Officer on 0151 296 4563 or by email on jackiesutton@merseyfire.gov.uk

2. Introduction

Merseyside is a metropolitan county in the north west of England, which straddles the Mersey Estuary and includes the metropolitan districts of Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

Merseyside spans 249 square miles (645 Km²) of land containing a mix of high density urban areas, suburbs, semi-rural and rural locations, but overwhelmingly the land use is urban. It has a focused central business district, formed by Liverpool City Centre, but Merseyside is also a polycentric county with five metropolitan districts, each of which has at least one major town centre and outlying suburbs.

Merseyside has a population of approximately 1.4 million residents but this is changing over time. Between 2001 and 2011 the overall population has increased by only 1 per cent (13,400 people in real terms) but the Asian/Asian British ethnic group has seen an 82.61 per cent increase between 2001 and 2007. Our [Profile of Merseyside Demography, Equality and Diversity](#) report outlines the communities we serve.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority continues to face a challenging financial future following cuts in our Government Grant that require £10m of savings to be delivered over the period 2013-15. The Government grant is our main source of income and the latest cut follows cuts requiring savings of £9.2m in the previous two years.

The organisation is, however, meeting these challenges from a position of strength following a period in which we have significantly reduced fires, fire deaths and injuries and made Merseyside a safer place. In addition, we have worked hard over the last year to anticipate the impact of the cuts and reduce the effect they will have on our communities by identifying options that will keep all our community fire stations open.

Our prevention work has been widely acknowledged and has been duly replicated around the world; however we are going to have to get even smarter, sharing risk data and intelligence to ensure we target our efforts towards the most vulnerable and most at risk. We will still give universal help and advice, but free smoke alarms will only be fitted in high risk homes or properties which we have not visited previously.

It is impossible for the requirement to make £19 million savings over the four years of the spending review not to have an impact on our services but we are confident we can make better use of the resources that remain to continue to deliver a high quality Fire and Rescue Service that compares favourably with any other in the Country.

MFRA published the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) and [IRMP 2013/16](#) in June 2013 to respond to the changing risks and needs within our communities. The Service Delivery Plan establishes the standards of performance expected. The Integrated Risk Management Plan sets out how we will continue to deliver our services. It describes a noticeably leaner but dynamic Service delivered in the most effective and efficient way. Anyone who needs us in an emergency will still receive one of the fastest responses in the country.

3. Governance arrangements

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority was established on 1st April 1986 by the Local Government Act 1985 which made provision for joint authorities to be established in the major metropolitan areas following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils.

Although the Authority does not have all the miscellaneous powers of a district authority, it is nonetheless a local Authority in its own right, separate and distinct from the constituent councils. It is therefore subject to the same rules and regulations which govern other local authorities.

The Authority

The Authority is made up of 18 Members, all of whom must be a councillor elected to one of the five constituent district councils within Merseyside (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Members of the Authority have a responsibility to the whole community of Merseyside and are directly accountable to the people of Merseyside for the running of the Fire and Rescue Service. All Members meet together as the Fire and Rescue Authority. Meetings of the Authority are normally open to the public.

The Authority has ultimate responsibility for decision making but has delegated many decisions to committees as part of their Terms of Reference (available to view in the Constitution) and Officers. Members work closely with Officers (the staff employed by the Authority) in developing policies, plans and strategies to give direction to the Service and to ensure that services are delivered in line with the Authority's objectives.

There are a number of organisations which are independent from the Authority, but have an impact on its service areas. In order that the Authority can maintain effective partnerships with a number of these organisations, Members of the Authority sit on the various committees and forums that are responsible for them:

- Association of Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities
- Fire Support Network
- Local Government Association
- Merseyside Brussels Office
- National Joint Council
- North West Employers' Organisation
- North West Partnership Board

Our legal responsibilities

The full [Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority](#) Constitution and Governance can be found on our website and details how the Authority conducts its business and includes detailed procedures and codes of practice including:

- Members code of conduct
- [MFRA Constitution 2013/14](#) and allowances
- Meetings, agendas and decisions
- [Complaints Procedure](#)

The Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework [CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government](#). The key principles of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance are outlined below;

Three high level principles underpin Corporate Governance:-

- Openness and inclusivity
- Accountability
- Integrity

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework

The Government has a responsibility to ensure that the public is adequately protected. For fires and other emergencies it does this by providing significant financial resources, giving authorities the power to raise additional local funding, and maintaining a statutory framework within which your local fire and rescue authority should operate.

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for FRA's in England. It recognises that operational matters are best determined locally by FRA's in partnership with their communities.

The priorities are:

- To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their area may face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- To work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service
- To be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

4. Overview of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Our Mission, Aims and Values

Our Mission; "Safer, stronger communities; safe, effective fire fighters", our aims and our values run as a golden thread through MFRA.

Our Aims

Excellent Operational Preparedness

We will provide our fire fighters with the training, information, procedures and equipment to ensure they can safely and effectively resolve all emergency incidents.

Excellent Operational Response

We will maintain an excellent emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core.

Excellent Prevention and Protection

We will work with our partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable through targeted local risk reduction interventions and the robust application of our legal powers.

Excellent People

We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all.

We plan our actions by embedding our core values into the way we deliver our services:

- Make a positive difference to our community;
- Provide an excellent and affordable service
- Everyone matters
- Respect our environment
- Our people are the best they can be.

An overview of the structure of MFRA is available in our [Organisational Structure chart](#)

Responsibility & accountability of the Chief Fire Officer

The Chief Fire Officer is the Head of Paid Service in law under S. 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989. The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for;

- *Ensuring that the staffing needs of the organisation are adequate to perform the Authority's statutory functions*
- *Ensuring that the discharge of the Authority's functions is efficiently and effectively co-ordinated*
- *Arranging for and ensuring the proper appointment and management of the Authority's staff.*
- *Arranging for and ensuring the effective organisation of the Authority's staff in an appropriate structure with relevant departments.*

Details of the powers delegated to the Chief Fire Officer (and in their absence the Deputy Chief Fire Officer,) who may further delegate to any member of either the Executive Team or the Strategic Management Group as appropriate, can be found on page 43 of the [MFRA Constitution 2013/14](#).

The success of our service provision is largely dependent on the skills, abilities and dedication of our staff. That is why we invest resources in ensuring that our people are the best they can be through training and development, appraisal, health and wellbeing. Our aim at MFRA is to have Excellent People:

'We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all'.

Staffing levels, including the number of Officers, can be found on the [DCLG](#) (Department for Communities and Local Government) and [CIPFA](#) (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) websites. A log in is required.

Organisational Development

Performance appraisal and personal development reviews are based on MFRA's personal values. Each member of staff has their individual training, learning and development needs identified by their line manager. This in turn informs an annual training needs analysis. This is used to identify new equipment, methods of working, health and safety risks, and compliance with legislation or succession planning which have arisen, or may, arise in the coming year.

Leadership Development

MFRA recognises the huge contribution our managers and leaders can make to our organisation. To support their development, and that of emerging managers, and to ensure the changing requirements of the organisation are being met, we invest both time and training hours in these individuals.

Leadership courses such as CMI (Chartered Management Institute) Levels 3 and 5, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) IOSH and National Examination Board of Safety and Health (NEBOSH) are attended by both uniformed and non-uniformed staff.

Operational managers are offered courses aimed at developing their knowledge, skills and values to enable them to effectively take over command on the incident ground.

Staff consultation - Representative Bodies

Uniformed staff are represented by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Fire Officers Association (FOA), non-uniformed staff by UNISON, UNITE and GMB. All are invited to take part in consultation around changes to staffing levels or conditions of service, the IRMP and any changes to the service MFRA provide. All are active members of Joint Secretaries, which is a meeting which brings together the representative

bodies with the Authority's Consultation Manager and our Director of People and Organisational Development.

Equality and Diversity

The public sector Equality Duty, of the Equality Act 2010, requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. MFRA is committed to considering equality and diversity in the way we provide our services and the [MFRA Equality and Diversity Statement](#) and supporting documentation is available on the website.

5. The risks we face in Merseyside

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) requires every fire and rescue authority to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan [link] to develop services to respond to those risks and help prevent incidents occurring. [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) also places a legal duty on local emergency responders to carry out assessments on the risks to their area and publish them. The [Merseyside Community Risk Register 2013](#) identifies the areas of potential risk to the population and infrastructure of Merseyside and the nature of that risk. The likelihood of an event occurring has been assessed using historical evidence and projected occurrence data relating to the risk occurring over a five year period at the magnitude reflected within the outcome description. The potential impact of such an emergency has been assessed with regard to health, social, economic and environmental effects in accordance with national guidance.

Social Risk

We know that deprivation and environment can increase risk from fire and other emergencies. In Merseyside there are some areas of affluence, for example in West Wirral and North Sefton, but large areas of Merseyside fall within the highest ratings of social deprivation. The indices of multiple deprivation indicate that 40 per cent of the wards in Merseyside are ranked in the top 5 per cent of the most deprived wards in England with high levels of social exclusion and crime. In addition, all the local authorities in Merseyside are within the top 20 per cent of the most income deprived in England. We consider this when we plan our services and target those services at people we identify as most at risk.

Environmental & Economic Risks

There are other types of risk too. Other risks within the Merseyside area include:

- Coastline bordering the west of the MFRA area.
- John Lennon Airport
- Under and over ground rail links, including under the River Mersey
- Two road tunnels under the River Mersey
- Two premier league football stadia
- Liverpool City Centre and many heritage buildings
- Dock estates in Liverpool and Birkenhead
- Beaches and areas of natural beauty such as Freshfield Pinewoods, Hilbre Island, Carr Mill Dam
- RAF Woodvale airfield, Altcar Army camp and rifle range.

- Industrial estates accommodating large factories down to small industrial units.
- Ten COMAH sites
- Large shopping areas including Liverpool One in the City Centre.
- Two Universities with large blocks of student accommodation both in and outside the city centre.

6. Risks beyond our borders

National & Local Resilience

Over recent years large scale emergency incidents have increased in the UK. This has been due to climate change and terrorist activities. As a direct result of this the Government introduced the 'National Resilience' project.

MFRA provides a substantial commitment to National Resilience by hosting an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team, a USAR canine team, USAR Subject Matter Advisors (SMA's), a High Volume Pump (HVP), a Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) team, Incident Response Unit (IRU) and Mass Decontamination Disrobe unit (MDD). We also have a total of 5 type B flood rescue teams declared on the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) national flood rescue asset register and one SMA. All of these assets are available at all times for national deployment.

In 2012 MFRA extended its USAR role, becoming a member of the UK International Search and Rescue Team (UKISAR), the internationally deployable International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) heavy classified USAR team. This team is available for deployment to incidents anywhere in the world.

Under Sections 13 and 16 of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) MFRA are required to have in place mutual assistance arrangements with neighbouring FRA's. These agreements are regularly reviewed.

Management of Risk

The fire and rescue service is a 24 hour a day, 365 days a year operation and as a result MFRA produces plans that enable it to respond to any events that could threaten service delivery in Merseyside. These plans include:

- Service Delivery Plan 2013/14
- IRMP 2013/16
- Budget 2013/14
- [Corporate Risk Register 2013](#)

All serve to identify and plan for new and potential risks to the Authority's assets and services.

Our [Business Continuity Management Policy](#) provides clear and defined strategies to address the following:

- Total loss of any Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Department.
- Significant/partial damage to any Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Department.
- Significant/partial Failure of the Information Technology system.
- Loss of /damage to information/data
- Loss of/disruption to primary utilities.
- Loss of staff/Pandemic.
- Loss of suppliers.

Functional Business Continuity Plans can be found on the internal MFRA portal.

7. Our Services to the Community

MFRA operates within clearly defined statutory and policy framework requirements as set out in the:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(Order\) 2007](#)
- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)

The [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) highlights MFRA's commitment to delivering an excellent service to the communities of Merseyside. This document brings together actions from the [IRMP 2013/16](#), District and Station Community Safety Delivery Plans, Functional and [Equality and Diversity](#) planning. All these plans are available to view through the MFRA Portal [Service Delivery Plan Link](#).

Excellent Operational Response

The Authority's priorities clearly stated in the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) are:

- To maintain an effective emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core
- The [Operational Response](#) function ensures that the Authority, on behalf of the public, is assured with regard to the readiness of its operational workforce, appliances, stations and equipment to respond appropriately and timely to emergencies, and that when we do respond our firefighters, procedures and equipment are safe and effective.
- The Operational Response function is led by an Operational Area Manager who is responsible for the operational element of the MFRA workforce. This is currently approximately 810 people across the 26 Fire Stations, our Mobilising and Communications Centre (MaCC) and Officer Groups. It should be noted however, that our IMRP proposed reductions in the number of firefighters to achieve the £3m savings we are required to make from our frontline service resulting in an anticipated establishment of 764 people by the end of this current round of cuts.

Prevention and Protection

Priorities for the [Prevention and Protection](#) function are:

Excellent Prevention

- Working with partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable
- The four key drivers for the MFRA's Prevention Strategy are; Home Safety, Road Safety - RTC Reduction, Arson/Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction and Youth Engagement
- The Prevention Team is led by the Area Manager for Prevention and Protection. The work is led by teams out in the five districts of Merseyside and each of these key areas also has a functional co-ordinator with responsibility for joining up prevention activity and improved outcomes for communities, including seasonal campaigns such as the bonfire period and community reassurance following incidents.

Excellent Protection

- Working in partnership to reduce risk in the built environment

- MFRA has duties to enforce, consult and provide fire safety advice on matters relating to Community Fire Protection. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is most commonly associated with Fire Authority enforcement; additional relevant legislation includes sub-surface railways, petroleum, fireworks and explosives, and building regulations.
- The Community Fire Protection (CFP) Policy was refreshed in October 2013 to:
- Provide the rationale and basis of the Authority's risk based audit approach to CFP;
- Provide strategic direction on the extent to which fire safety legislation applies;
- Direct resources to ensure levels of fire protection are met and enforced as required in the relevant fire safety legislation;
- Provide overarching direction for all CFP priorities, instructions and guidance

8. Our Performance

The MFRA [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) reports on performance for 2012/13 and establishes the Local Performance Indicators (LPI's) and service delivery standards for 2013/14. Performance against the LPI's is reported to Authority in a [quarterly performance report](#), Strategic Management Group and the Performance Management Group (PMG) on a monthly basis.

Budget cuts of £10m have meant that we have had to become smarter about how we target our prevention and protection work. This is reflected in both our planning and performance with fewer Home Fire Safety Checks delivered to specifically targeted people identified in need of our intervention. Likewise we have reviewed and introduced a new Unwanted Fire Signal Strategy which has seen the number of incidents of this type attended drop by 50%.

All Districts and stations produce and report on a Community Safety Delivery Plan, in consultation with partners and stakeholders, to agree local targets for priorities within in each district. These plans are available to view in all community fire stations and on each community fire station page on our website www.merseyfire.gov.uk

Performance is managed and reported on at all levels and in all functions with staff working hard to reduce the number of emergency incidents that occur in Merseyside. The table illustrates the number of incidents attended by type, for an average day between 2006/07 and 2012/13. The table identifies that during 2012/13 44 (43.06) incidents were attended on a daily basis against 87 (86.66) during 2006/07. This reduction provides evidence that working with local partners and MFRA's own initiatives and campaigns has had a beneficial impact on the peoples and communities of Merseyside.

Incident Type	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Accidental Fires in the Home	3.75	3.6	3.57	3.55	3.28	3.27	3.11
Other Building and Property Fires	5.8	4.75	4.24	3.93	3.26	3.16	2.46
Vehicle Fires	5.44	4.15	3.72	3.3	2.61	2.20	1.97
All Antisocial Behaviour Fires	36.84	29.63	22.85	21.88	20.72	18.52	11.79
False Automatic Fire Alarms	14.7	15.02	16.57	16.31	16.21	15.23	12.40
Other False Alarms	9.88	8.71	7.4	6.83	5.70	4.96	4.77
Road Traffic Collisions	2.45	2.08	1.99	1.78	1.53	1.39	5.27
Other Special Services	7.8	6.59	5.97	5.46	5.90	5.25	1.28
Grand Total	86.66	74.52	66.31	63.05	59.21	53.99	43.06

What others have said about our performance?

During November 2012 MFRA voluntarily took part in an [Operational Peer Assessment](#), carried out by Senior Managers from other Fire and Rescue Services, the Police and Local Government. This assessment has a strong operational focus, comprising both self-assessment and peer challenge. The [Final Fire Peer Challenge Report](#) was presented to a full Authority meeting and is available to view on the MFRA website.

The team commented on our “**strong position to meet the financial challenge**” and a “**credible political and managerial leadership, a loyal, committed and motivated workforce and a very strong track record in service delivery**”. The team also commented on the strength of MFRA’s ‘effective **joint working**’ with partner agencies such as the Police, Ambulance, local authorities and neighbouring FRA’s.

In May 2013 the MFRA USAR team was subject to the USAR assurance process undertaken by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT). The [USAR Capability Assurance Report](#) identified no areas of non-conformance against the key areas of assessment and many areas of exemplar best practice.

9. [Financial Performance](#)

In accordance with the statutory requirement under the [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) MFRA published a [Statement of Accounts 2012/13](#) and [Annual Governance Statement 2012/13](#) to illustrate that business is being conducted transparently and in accordance with the law and ‘that public money is being properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively’. *Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999.*

Internal Audit

The Authority procured its internal audit service under a service level agreement from Liverpool City Council and the arrangement and service was in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government 2006.

The Annual Review of Internal Audit Report concluded that:

“the Authority’s internal control environment is adequate and effective, bearing in mind that any control system can provide only reasonable assurance and not absolute assurance. Based on the audit work carried out in 2012/13 we are not aware of any significant control weaknesses within MFRA which impact on the Annual Governance Statement”

External Audit

External audit services are carried out by the Grant Thornton who replaced the District Auditor during 2012/13, on behalf of the Audit Commission.

External Audit will comment upon the Authority’s 2012/13 statutory financial statements and make a Value for Money conclusion during the 2013/14 financial year in the Annual Governance report and Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. These documents reflect the Auditor’s findings and conclusions from auditing the Statement of Accounts.

The Annual Governance Report and District Audit Annual Letter covering 2012/13 have been available on the MFRA website. The document confirmed the Authority’s overall performance continues to be strong and the Authority received an unqualified opinion on the 2012/13 financial statements.

Our budget for 2013/14

The Authority is on track to deliver the planned savings in relation to the £9m target for 2011/12 – 2012/13 and the Authority approved a financial plan on 26th February, 2013, that will deliver the required additional £10m savings over 2013/14 2015/16 period. A summary of the budget challenges and plans for 2013/14 is available in both the [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) and [IRMP 2013/16](#)

Financial Management

The Authority produces a five year financial plan that takes into account Revenue, Capital, Reserves and Prudential Borrowing forecasts. The Authority has a history of strong and effective financial management, as confirmed in the 2012/13 Annual Governance Report by the Audit Commission.

Our long term financial challenges and commitments

The Authority is seriously concerned about the Government’s announcement over further grant cuts in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Plans will need to be developed to deal with these further budget cuts requiring major savings of around a further £10m on top of savings already achieved. It will be impossible to make these savings without impacting on service delivery.

10. Our Future Plans

Detailed in the [IRMP 2013/16](#) and [Service Delivery Plan 2013-14](#) our future plans will be focused on delivering an excellent service to the residents and businesses of Merseyside with less resources, making more efficient use of resources we have. The planning process for the Service Delivery Plan and Community Safety Delivery Plans will begin shortly and will include some challenging targets. The Authority are about to commence planning for further budget cuts of around £9.1m for the years 2015-17.

It will be impossible to make these savings without impacting on service delivery and MFRA will be commencing consultation on possible station mergers or closures.

Community Engagement & Communication

MFRA undertake extensive consultation around all aspects of planning including the IRMP and any changes to how we provide our services. All relevant IRMP documentation is available in the Authority section - [Consultation Reports for IRMP 2013/16](#)

We consult with our communities at independently facilitated public consultation events in the five districts. Principal Officers and district management teams deliver briefings and consultation exercises with staff, representative bodies, Councillors, partners, stakeholders and Local Authority leaders. The [Corporate Communication Policy](#) presents a co-ordinated approach to delivering information.

Extensive [Consultation](#) with stakeholders within the community is embedded within all aspects of planning in MFRA with all relevant documentation available on the MFRA website and in the [IRMP 2013/16](#). We host a wide variety of consultation and engagement forums including:

- Public consultation facilitated by an independent partner organisation – [ORS Public Consultation Report 2013 Appendix B to IRMP 2013/16](#)
- Staff consultation
- Local authority and strategic partner consultations
- Staff representative bodies (trade unions)

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority wishes to continue to be provided with assurance in relation to its fire and rescue service including financial health, governance arrangements and service delivery performance. It will be necessary in 2014 to consult with all interested parties and make difficult decisions around service delivery. However the communities of Merseyside can be assured of the Authorities absolute commitment to continuing to deliver the best service it possibly can.

The Statement of Accounts and Governance Statement will form the basis of the Statement of Assurance in the future.

Access to Information Held by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Government Legislation has been introduced to make public sector organisations more open and accountable to the public. There are primarily three key Acts of Parliament that have been put in place. These consist of:-

- The Data Protection Act 1998 which allows people to have access to their personal information that is held by the Authority.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000, which broadens people's access to information that is held by public authorities, for example: reports, minutes of meetings etc.
- The Environmental Information Regulations which gives the public increased access to environmental information held by public authorities, for example: reports, readings, research findings etc.

How to gain [Access to information](#) held by MFRA and details of how the legislation above governs what information can be released can be found on the MFRA website.

Authorisation

This Statement of Assurance is signed on behalf of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority as approved at the Authority meeting on Tuesday 3rd December 2013.

Councillor Dave Hanratty.
Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

Glossary of Terms

CFP	Community Fire Protection or Prevention
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CMI	Chartered Management Institute
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazard
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs
DIM	Detection, Identification and Monitoring
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FOA	Fire Officers Association
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
HVP	High Volume Pump
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
IOSH	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
MACC	Mobilising and Communication Centre
MDD	Mass Decontamination Disrobe
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
NEBOSH	National Examination Board of Safety
SMA	Subject Matter Adviser
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
UKISAR	UK International Search and Rescue Team
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue