



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation

Report of findings from a Community Consultation Forum



Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation

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Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) on the community consultation forum reported here. The diverse participants engaged with the issues and discussed their ideas readily, so we trust that this report of findings will help to inform service planning.

We thank MFRS for commissioning the project as part of its on-going regular programme of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation about its risk management and budget planning.

We particularly thank the senior staff who attended the session to listen to the public's views and answer questions. The meeting benefited considerably from their readiness to answer participants' questions fully and frankly, as in this case.

We are grateful to the 33 members of the public who took part in the meeting to share their views with us: they were patient in listening to important and detailed background information before entering positively into open discussions about challenging topics.

At all stages of the project, ORS's status as an independent organisation engaging with the public as fairly as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about future service delivery.

1. Key Findings

Key consultation findings

MFRS's proposals were generally supported, some more than others

- 1.1 There were very high levels of agreement with all of the Service's CRMP 2024-27 proposals, as outlined below:
- » All 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:
 - Work in areas of higher risk to educate and inform the communities in those areas on known and foreseeable risk and the actions they can take to make themselves safer (31 strongly agreed).
 - Work with partners to plan for/respond to the emerging threat from fires involving alternative fuels (31 strongly agreed).
 - Target Prevention work toward those most likely to die in a fire and the areas of highest deprivation (30 strongly agreed).
 - Keep fire engines 'on the run' by crewing them with three firefighters to non-life risk incidents until four firefighters become available through overtime or moves from other stations (29 strongly agreed).
 - Enhance its water rescue capabilities through introducing either a sub-surface drone or a diving team (25 strongly agreed).
 - » 32 of 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:
 - Introduce 'enhanced mobilisation' via a pre-alert system (28 strongly agreed).
 - Continue to assist the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) in relation to cardiac response and expanding this to people who have had falls (28 strongly agreed).
 - Use the new Training and Development Academy for national and international training (28 strongly agreed).
 - Increase fire engine numbers from 32 to 34 to increase resilience for high demand periods (27 strongly agreed).
 - » 31 of 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:
 - Use improved technology in its Control Room (28 strongly agreed).
 - Introduce a new framework for fire safety-related enforcements and prosecutions to improve public safety (27 strongly agreed).
 - Reintroduce a Small Fires Unit to help when there are large numbers of lower level (not life-risk) incidents (25 strongly agreed).
- 1.2 There was slightly lower, but still strong, agreement with MFRS working with the Home Office on the programme to refresh current National Resilience assets (30 of 33 participants agreed, 21 strongly); using its Watch Managers differently to carry out different duties that add value and respond to incidents in a different way (29 of 33 participants agreed, 12 strongly); and focusing on Net Zero (27 of 33 participants agreed (17 strongly). This is perhaps as these are seen as 'internal' fire and rescue service issues that the public cannot or should not influence.

2. The Consultation Process

Overview of the engagement

Background to the review

- 2.1 'Community Risk Management' is the development of a balanced approach by Fire and Rescue Services to reducing risk within the community. This is achieved by combining Prevention, Protection and Emergency Response, on a risk-assessed basis, in order to improve the safety of the community and create a safer working environment for firefighters.
- 2.2 In 2020/21, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) developed and consulted on its most recent Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2021-24, which was subsequently approved. The Service began to develop its Plan for 2024-27 (renamed the Community Risk Management Plan, or CRMP) in 2023, and in October of that year held five community engagement forums with members of the public, one in each of Merseyside's five local authority areas, to discuss how it might provide fire and rescue services during this period. The views expressed in those forums, along with other relevant evidence, have helped shape the CRMP 2024-27 proposals discussed at the session reported here, which was attended by 33 of the participants from the engagement forums.

The commission

- 2.3 Opinion Research Services (ORS) - a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research - was appointed to convene, facilitate and report a face-to-face forum with members of the public from across Merseyside (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral). Pre-consultation listening and engagement and formal consultation meetings have been undertaken with residents across Merseyside on a regular cycle; and in this context ORS has facilitated both district-based and all-Merseyside forums for the Service for many years.

Deliberative engagement

Consultation forum

- 2.4 The forum reported here used a 'deliberative' approach that encouraged members of the public to reflect in depth about MFRS's CRMP 2024-27 proposals while both receiving and questioning extensive background information.
- 2.5 The meeting (which was held on 30th April 2024 at the MFRS headquarters in Bootle) lasted for 2.5 hours and 33 diverse participants took part. As aforementioned, all participants – who were recruited by ORS – had attended one of the engagement forums held in October 2023.
- 2.6 In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors. The recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria including, for example: geographical area; gender; age; working status; and disability/limiting long-term illness (LLTI). Overall, as demonstrated in the table below, participants represented a broad cross-section of residents – and as standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in and taking part.

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	GENDER	AGE	WORKING STATUS	LIMITING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY	ETHNIC GROUP
Knowsley: 8 Liverpool: 8 Sefton: 7 St Helens: 3 Wirral: 7	Male: 17 Female: 13	16-34: 5 35-44: 5 35-54: 10 55-64: 6 65+: 7	Working full- or part-time: 22 Not working/retired: 11	5	White British: 28 BAME: 5

2.7 Although, like all other forms of qualitative engagement, deliberative forums cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meeting reported here gave diverse members of the public the opportunity to participate actively. Because the meeting was inclusive, the outcomes are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

The agenda

2.8 The forum began with a presentation to recap some contextual background information around MFRS’s purpose and vision, and the importance of the Service factoring risk, demand and vulnerability into how it uses its resources. A selection of the slides used to outline this can be seen below and overleaf.

Where do we start... MFRS’s statutory duties

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
 - Respond
 - Prevent (home and community safety)
 - Protect (commercial and public buildings)
 - Educate and inform
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
 - Work with other agencies to deal with emergencies
- The National Framework 2018
 - Identify & Assess Risk
 - Prevent & Protect
 - Respond
 - Collaborate
 - Business Continuity (Intervention)
 - National Resilience
- Other
 - Duty to collaborate
 - Serious Violence Duty
 - Safeguarding Duty

And what should influence its thinking

- What our communities think/consultation outcomes
- What data/intelligence is telling us
- National Fire Standards
- Our Medium Term Financial Plan and People Plan
- HMICFRS
 - Efficiency
 - Effectiveness
 - People

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Preventing fire and risk	Understanding fire and risk	Promoting values and culture		
Responding to major incidents	Public safety through fire regulation	Right people, right skills		
Best use of resources	Responding to fires and emergencies	Promoting fairness and diversity		
	Future affordability			
	Managing performance and developing leaders			

So what does MFRS need to think about when developing a Community Risk Management Plan?

Ultimately it comes down to...

Risk

- Identifying people, buildings and places where there is a likelihood of an emergency incident happening that would have a potentially serious effect on communities

Demand

- Using information about where, when and how often incidents have happened in the past to better understand what happened and plan to respond effectively/ efficiently to such demand in the future

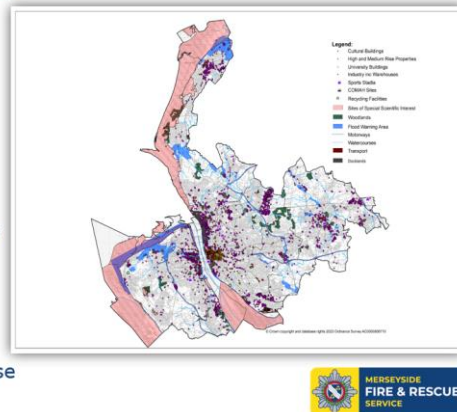
Vulnerability

- Using information from MFRS and other organisations to identify the types of people most likely to have a fire/other emergency and most likely to suffer harm

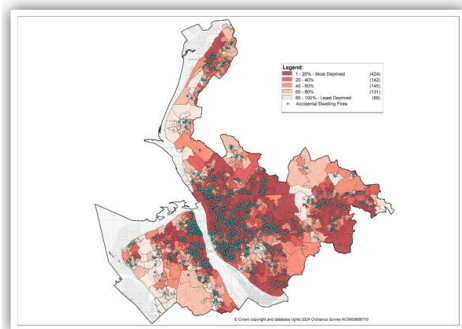


Then it can consider high impact areas...

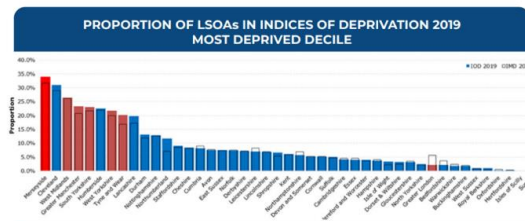
- MFRS has identified 6 high impact incident types it should focus on...
 - Terrorist-related incidents
 - Marine incidents
 - Wildfire
 - Flooding
 - Fires in large buildings (e.g. high-rise [Grenfell])
 - Fires at recycling/waste processing plants
- Plotting these risks on a map → identify where risks are and place resources to meet them (e.g., Combined Platform Ladder in the City Centre → most high-rise buildings)



Understanding demand, which is inextricably linked to deprivation

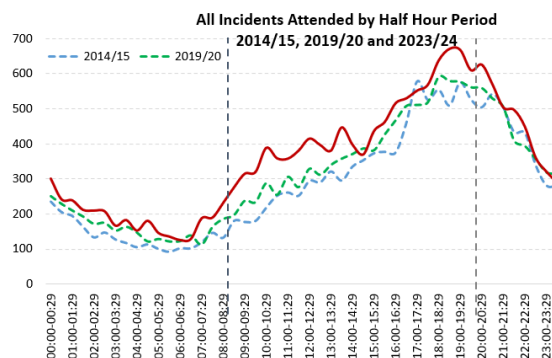


- Incidents aren't evenly spread across Merseyside
 - Almost half of all fires occur in the most deprived areas
 - Only 15% happen in the least deprived areas
- Knowing where emergency incidents happen helps Merseyside plan where it puts its resources



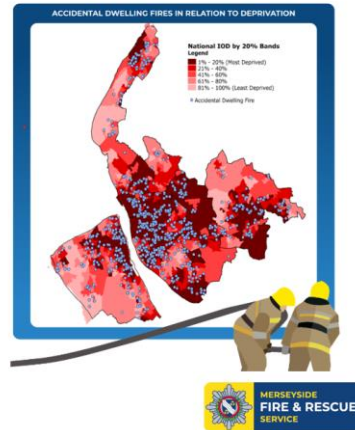
It also fluctuates...

- Demand fluctuates between day and night
- Crews twice as busy and much more productive during the day than at night
- Knowing this, MFRS ensures its fire engines are in the right place at the right time

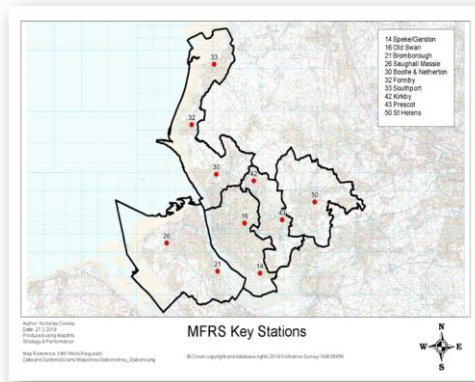


But you can be vulnerable wherever you live

- Vulnerability can be anywhere on Merseyside (so need resources available everywhere) → 10 key stations



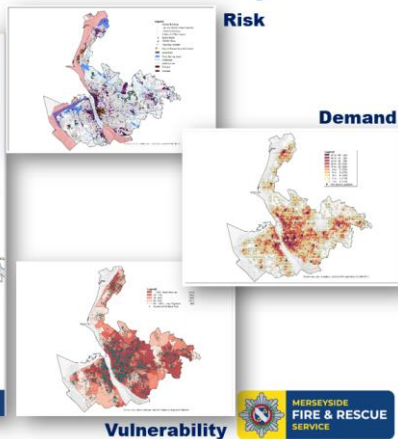
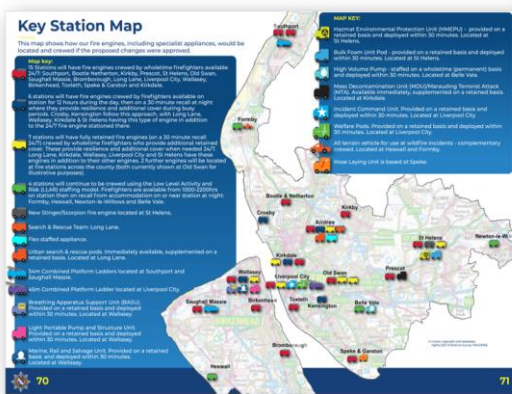
'10 Key Stations' help MFRS attain Response Standard of 'within 10 minutes on 90% of occasions'



Achieved on 95.4% of occasions
Average response time is 5 minutes 53 seconds



Ultimately MFRS must overlay resources (and develop specialist resources) to meet risk, demand and vulnerability



2.9 The subsequent discussion then covered MFRS's CRMP proposals in turn (these are outlined in the following chapter). Participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout, and the meeting was thorough and truly deliberative in listening to and responding openly to a wide range of evidence and issues.

The report

- ^{2.10} This report reviews the sentiments and judgements of respondents and participants on MFRS’s CRMP 2024-27 proposals. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them – it is for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse any opinions but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants.

3. Focus Group Findings

Detailed consultation findings

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter reports the views from a deliberative forum with members of the public across Merseyside, which was independently facilitated by ORS.
- 3.2 The meeting followed a pre-determined topic guide which allowed space for a general discussion of the key questions under consideration. A series of information slides were shared at set points during the session, which ensured that participants had sufficient background information to actively deliberate on the proposals. The meetings were thorough and truly deliberative in listening to and responding openly to a wide range of evidence and issues.
- 3.3 In order to quantify views on the main engagement issues, participants were given a workbook in which they could record their responses to key questions. Responses to these were captured and are reported in this chapter, but it is important to note that this was a qualitative research exercise and the numerical findings from the exercise are not statistically valid.
- 3.4 This is not a verbatim transcript of the session, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in a free-ranging discussion and in their workbooks.

Main findings

MFRS's 'proposals' were generally supported, some more than others

- 3.5 Participants were informed that if possible and financially viable, MFRS is proposing to:
 - » Increase its fire engines from 32 to 34 to enhance specialist response and resilience for high demand periods.
 - » Reintroduce a Small Fires Unit (crewed by three firefighters) to help when there are large numbers of lower level (not life-risk) incidents, freeing up traditional fire engines for bigger and life-risk incidents.
 - » Keep fire engines 'on the run' by crewing them with three firefighters to non-life risk incidents (until four firefighters become available through overtime or an additional firefighter being moved from another station).
 - » Enhance its water rescue capability through introducing either a sub-surface drone or a diving team.
 - » Work with partners to plan for and respond to the emerging threat from fires involving alternative fuels (e.g., lithium-ion batteries and hydrogen fuel cells).
 - » Use improved technology in its Control Room such as 'Enhanced Mobilisation' (pre-alerting fire engines), 'Aura' (dynamic mapping of fire engines using Automatic Vehicle Location) and '999Eye'.
 - » Use its Watch Managers differently to undertake duties that add value, while responding to incidents in a different way.

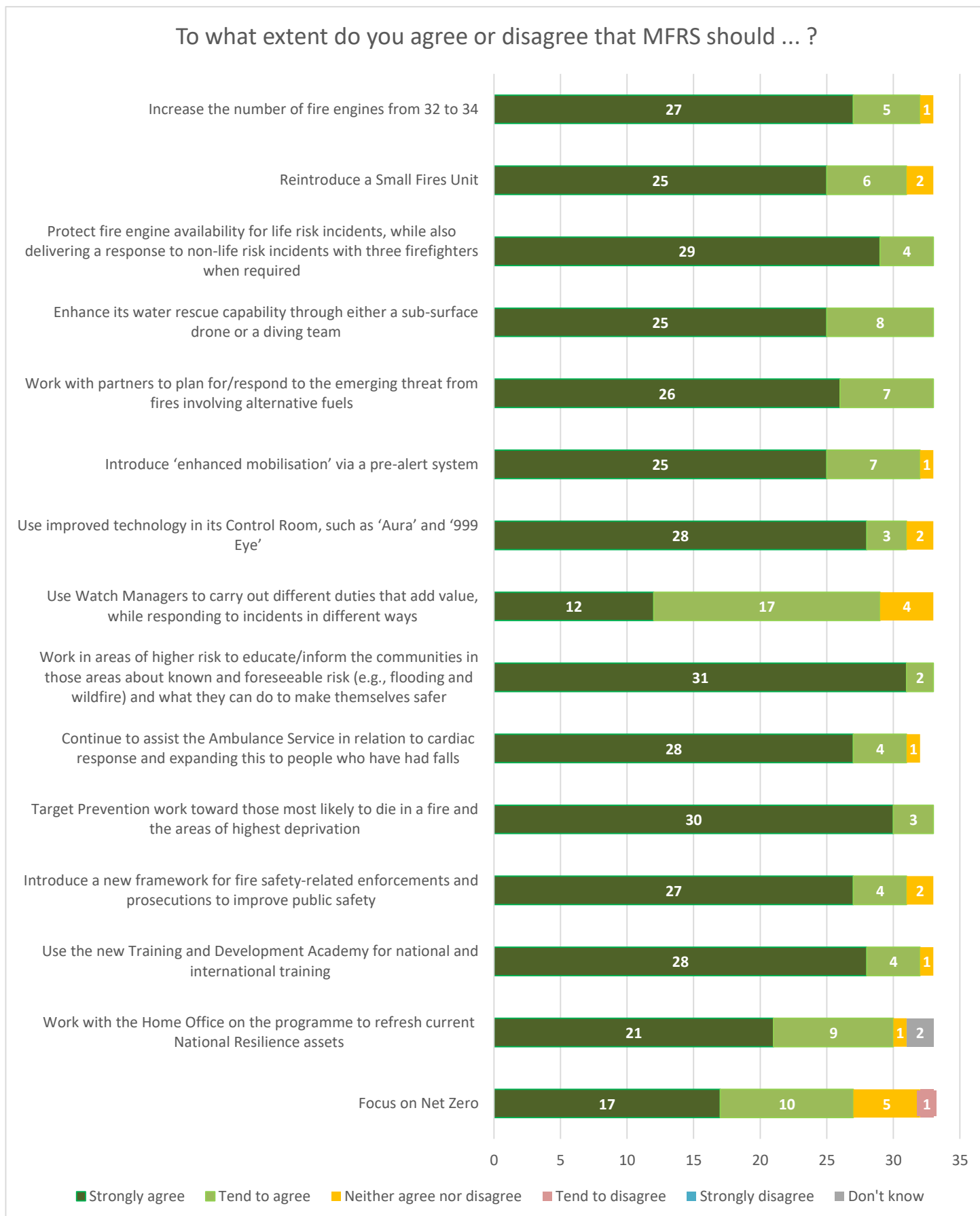
- » Work in areas of higher risk to educate and inform the communities in those areas on known and foreseeable risk (e.g., flooding and wildfire) and the actions they can take to make themselves safer.
- » Continue to assist the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) in relation to cardiac response and expanding this to people who have had falls, where the likelihood would be that an ambulance would not respond for over six hours.
- » Target its Prevention work toward those most likely to die in a fire and the areas of highest deprivation; especially those living in sheltered accommodation who are at highest risk.
- » Introduce a new framework for fire safety-related enforcements and prosecutions to improve public safety and address legal changes following the Grenfell Tower incident.
- » Use its new Training and Development Academy for national and international training, subject to requests, with any funding raised redirected to benefit Merseyside communities.
- » As the lead authority for National Resilience, work with the Home Office on the programme to refresh current National Resilience assets (New Dimension 2¹).
- » Focus on delivering Net Zero.

^{3.6} Worksheets were used to determine levels of agreement or otherwise with MFRS's proposals. The results from these can be seen in Figure 1; and the comments made on each of the proposals in the worksheets and in discussion follow.

¹ The New Dimension programme funds the specialist equipment/training that helps England's fire and rescue services deal with a wide range of large or national-scale incidents.

Figure 1: Extent of agreement with MFRS’s proposals (percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding)

Base 33 (all questions)



Increasing fire engines from 32 to 34

- 3.7 The prospect of increasing the number of MFRS fire engines from 32 to 34 was almost universally supported on the grounds of efficiency and resilience, and to help maintain the 10-minute response standard, especially during periods of high demand.

“Introduces and maintains capability across Merseyside.”

“[An] enhanced service with adequate resources needs to be identified and provided. Win/win!”

“We need as many as possible. It’s an emergency service not a business.”

- 3.8 Some, though, questioned the need for, and value for money of, additional resources given response time standards are being well met currently. There was also some concern about being able to staff the extra resources.

“If the evidence indicates that this is required, but current statistics are looking excellent”

“Should only be employed if you think this is really needed at the moment”

“My only concern is manning the extra vehicles. Is there enough staff?”

- 3.9 In light of this, one participant suggested that appliance numbers should not increase beyond 34 unless the area experiences a significant rise in demand.

“If it’s 34 then stopped I agree...”

Reintroducing a small fires unit

- 3.10 Reintroducing a small fires unit was, for many participants, a way of providing a more dynamic, flexible, and efficient service and maximising resources. In particular, they were pleased with the prospect of reducing pressure on the Service during busy periods and freeing up larger appliances for life-threatening incidents.

“Makes a lot of sense to meet the need of the firs service, with smaller units freeing up fire engines for life threatening incidents.”

“This would reduce non-useable appliance time.”

“Sounds good to recognise funding and staffing cuts and sickness and allow the team to be changed accordingly.”

- 3.11 A few participants also suggested that the proposed small fires unit should be renamed to better reflect its purpose and the wide remit of the Fire and Rescue Service more generally.

“This seems like a great idea and seems like the right strategy, but it needs a more comprehensive name.”

“Rename this proposal. Does not do what this service provides justice!”

- 3.12 A couple of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal, not because they were opposed to it, but because they were mindful of MFRS’s potential budgetary constraints and would prefer it to focus on other proposals if forced to make a choice.

“I think this would be very beneficial, but unsure if it should be in the high priority list compared to other things.”

Keeping fire engines ‘on the run’ by crewing them with three firefighters to non-life risk incidents

- 3.13 This ‘proposal’ was considered a sensible use and prioritisation of resources by most participants.

“Engine availability is paramount to safety.”

“Makes sense using units that can address non-life risk incidents.”

“Very important; the availability for life-risk incidents is imperative.”

“I was surprised to hear this isn’t being done now.”

- 3.14 However, reassurance was sought that three-person crews would not become the ‘norm’, and that the model would be amended in the event of improved resourcing.

“[I have] concerns about difficulty moving away from the model if resources improve.”

“You need to make it clear that it’s just under exceptional circumstances as there will be challenges... people asking, ‘Well you’re operating perfectly well with just three, why can’t you operate all your appliances on three?’”

- 3.15 Furthermore, one participant expressed concerns around staff capacity and wellbeing, another stressed the importance of ensuring workforce skills and capabilities are sufficient to ensure the safe and effective delivery of this proposal, and another questioned how MFRS staff have reacted to the proposal.

“Consider the multi-skilling element and capabilities of the remaining workforce so they meet the requirements of the roles needed for the safe delivery of a three-man crew.”

“How have the staff taken to the proposals? Has there been any kickback or concerns as people typically don’t like change?”

Enhancing water rescue capability through introducing either a sub-surface drone or a diving team

- 3.16 Water rescue was considered an essential aspect of MFRS’s work, given Merseyside’s coastal location and the dangers of the River Mersey.

“Due to the characterisation of our area, this is very appropriate.”

“We are a dock city and I understand we can recover but not rescue. This rescue service is imperative and needs focus.”

“Considering the amount of coastline, water sports etc. that occur in Merseyside this is a vital part of the service that is offered.”

- 3.17 There were, though, concerns about the cost of this proposal, a sub-surface drone in particular. As such, given MFRS's budgetary constraints, some participants explicitly favoured upskilling the existing marine rescue team over purchasing a drone.

"[My] only concern is the finance involved in such tech."

"How much would a sub-surface drone cost? Would this be fit for looking for bodies? Would the resources be better used with a diving team."

- 3.18 Moreover, one participant worried that the often-protracted nature of water rescues/recoveries could detract a diving team from other incidents (assuming they would also function as firefighters).

"Considering the geographical location this seems like a good investment... However, would the diving team take away from other emergencies? Considering diving could take hours and seems to be more of a recovery than a rescue."

- 3.19 In terms of suggestions, one participant asked whether it might be possible to enlist the assistance of partners such as the RNLI in delivering this proposal, while it was acknowledged that it is a charity rather than a statutory services, whose volunteers may not have the requisite time or competencies to assist.

Working with partners to plan for/respond to the emerging threat from fires involving alternative fuels

- 3.20 Participants understood that anything containing a lithium-ion battery and hydrogen fuel cells could pose risks and challenges to MFRS. They thus strongly supported MFRS's proposal to work with partners to plan for and respond to these.

"A new threat, but a real threat."

"Appears to be thinking ahead in line with technological changes."

"The batteries and fuel cells are a problem and a current issue that wasn't really pertinent five to 10 years ago. It's good to know this is being taken into account."

- 3.21 People sought clarification on what partners MFRS would seek to work with to address these new threats, strongly suggesting that any collaboration should include manufacturers of products including lithium-ion batteries and hydrogen fuel cells to facilitate joint understanding and solutions.

"It would be good to know the scale/amount of resource that will be assigned to this activity and what partners will be worked with."

"Businesses need to address and collaborate with the fire service on ways to minimise and treat these fires."

- 3.22 It was also widely recognised that it is not necessarily the batteries themselves that are the issue in many cases, but the preponderance of devices using cheap and/or counterfeit parts that have not undergone the relevant safety checks. Public education (both local and national) around this issue - and the correct storage of items such as electric scooters and bikes - was thus considered imperative.

“This is only going to keep growing as an issue so should be invested in now. A particular focus on community education would be beneficial.”

“Thinking about the batteries, it’s people buying the crap online isn’t it? People buying the crappy equipment which is then causing fires. So it’s about the education and preventing that equipment coming into the country.”

Using improved technology in the MFRS Control Room, such as ‘Enhanced Mobilisation’, ‘Aura’, and ‘999Eye’

- 3.23 Participants were almost unanimously in favour of MFRS using whatever technology it has at its disposal to make its operations more streamlined and effective. The general sense was that this would allow the Service to make gains in a cost-efficient way, and there was some surprise that it is not in use already.

“Any low-cost method that improves response time to reach incidents can only be for the greater good.”

“Any improvement in response times could be vital to saving lives.”

“I’m shocked this doesn’t exist already. With all the technology developments, this could even be AI.”

- 3.24 The use of enhanced mobilisation via a pre-alert system was praised for its potential to improve response times, though there was some feeling (among a small minority) that investment in it may be unnecessary given MFRS’s already excellent response times.

- 3.25 Participants also liked the idea of 999Eye to aid the control centre in its decision-making around the type and level of resource required at an incident, particularly with the advent of more combustible materials. There was also some feeling that it could assist in reducing the number of false alarms being attended.

“Real time view of the incident could determine how many crew need to be sent. Win/win.”

“This is exciting; that incidents can be seen to determine the correct response.”

- 3.26 It was, though, suggested that some people may have concerns about privacy that would need to be addressed, and that some demographic groups (older people for example) might be unwilling or unable to use technology like this.

“Need to be aware that some members of the public may not have the technological skills to help deliver this. Make the public aware that it is a one-off situation given the privacy and GDPR concerns that some may have regarding MFRS being able to access their device in the future.”

“As long as the public are aware that these are “one off” streaming sessions.”

- 3.27 Moreover, one participant suggested that: *“People could stay in dangerous environments attempting to live stream or re-enter dangerous environments having left and opened the link.”*
- 3.28 In light of the above, it was suggested that more public education will be required if this technology is to become more ‘mainstream’ to allay people’s concerns around its use and privacy implications.

Using Watch Managers to carry out different duties that add value and respond to incidents in a different way

- 3.29 Participants were on the whole prepared to support the idea of using Watch Managers as described as a means of working smarter and more effectively, providing implementation is undertaken carefully and sensitively, and takes watch managers’ relative experience into consideration.

“Better to use people’s expertise so long as they can be called back quickly to occurring incidents. Smarter working.”

“Considerations need to be given to watch and crew managers’ capabilities and experience to ensure they don’t miss valuable experience. Will there be a mentor programme in place to assist them in this? For more experienced/longer serving watch managers this appears to be an effective use of resources.”

- 3.30 Indeed, participants were reassured when it was explained that this proposal would be rolled out gradually to account for individual skillsets and experience levels, albeit one person still felt that the model should be tested on a small-scale initially to *“tease out”* any issues.

“The idea of a gradual roll-out linked to individual skillsets appears to be an ideal methodology.”

- 3.31 One participant also suggested that the change might *“offer a different progression route. For example increased opportunities for the chance to gain leadership experience for future service leaders.”*
- 3.32 Residual concerns were around isolation, and the potential for different duties to detract watch managers from their core roles and responsibilities.

“Would increase efficiency, but would it be isolating and add pressure to those earlier in their career working more alone?”

“... I am concerned that this is the most senior person and could be away from a serious incident or even multiple incidents doing other things.”

Working in areas of higher risk to educate and inform the communities in those areas on known and foreseeable risk (e.g., flooding and wildfire) and the actions they can take to make themselves safer

- 3.33 Prevention and education were thought to be vital in reducing risk and incident levels, and cost-effective in the long-term. As such, providing communities with as much information as possible about the known and foreseeable risks they face and what they themselves can do to mitigate against them was strongly supported.

“Prevention work is as important as response.”

“Education in this field to the community and informing them about risks can only be effective and productive.”

“Having lived in an area prone to flooding, we were completely unaware until we had fatalities.”

Continuing to assist the NWS in relation to cardiac response and expanding this to people who have had falls

- 3.34 Many participants were happy to support the expansion of MFRS assistance to NWS to include people who have had falls, providing firefighters do not become replacements for paramedics (although it was recognised that they would need falls training and equipment); and that it is not at the expense of the Service’s core functions.

“Better to have an experienced/knowledgeable first aid firefighter to provide assistance than to have to wait for an ambulance that could take much longer.”

“Fire service will need falls equipment and training, but I can see the benefit, especially to help prevent long-lie and mortality risk.”

“Provided this does not impact adversely on the primary activities of the Fire and Rescue Service.”

- 3.35 Indeed, in this day and age, collaboration was considered key in ensuring public services can function as effectively as possible.

“When capacity allows it I don’t see a reason not to support other services that are over-stretched.”

- 3.36 Those who had concerns about the expansion did not see this as the fire and rescue service’s role. They instead called for investment into NWS and were concerned that this would not happen for as long as some of its activity is undertaken by MFRS.

“Just disappointing that this can’t be done by the NHS. Should funding be reallocated?”

“Would rather more resources were spent by government to improve the ambulance service.”

Targeting Prevention work toward those most likely to die in a fire and the areas of highest deprivation

- 3.37 Once again, Prevention and education were considered key to addressing risk and it was considered sensible that activity is targeted toward those who will benefit most from it. The need for constant reinforcement of safety messages was urged, however.

“[It] is important to look at high risk areas and process accordingly.”

“Absolutely, but this must be reinforced frequently.”

Introduce a new framework for fire safety-related enforcements and prosecutions to improve public safety

- 3.38 This was supported by most as both a protection and a deterrent. In particular, it was considered essential that private rented sector properties are included within any fire safety framework to ensure tenant safety.

“Brilliant idea that can save lives and influence prevention at source.”

- 3.39 This was not considered something MFRS can implement alone however, with the Health and Safety Executive also thought to play an important part in highlighting non-compliance with public safety measures.

“It’s not just HSE doing what they need to do, landlords doing what they do, MFRS doing something separate... it’s the joint working that’s needed.”

Using the new Training and Development Academy for national and international training

- 3.40 Using the new Training and Development Academy for national and international training was supported as a means of raising revenue, enhancing the profile of MFRS, and allowing the Service to share its knowledge and ideas.

“At the forefront of fire and rescue, and maybe a revenue stream.”

“Absolutely! Show the country/world what we’re good at.”

“Very positive opportunity for our area and for spreading and developing good practice.”

“This is the way forward in developing new recruits in new ways and skills.”

Work with the Home Office on the programme to refresh current National Resilience assets

- 3.41 Few participants commented on this proposal, but those who did were pleased that MFRS has the expertise to lead something as important as the New Dimensions programme.

“Demonstrates just how significant and effective MFRS are.”

“MFRS has the credibility to do this.”

- 3.42 A couple of comments suggested a lack of understanding around what the proposal would mean in practice, or that participants may not know enough about the programme to make a judgement.

Focusing on achieving Net Zero

- 3.43 Although not a proposal, participants were asked whether they supported MFRS’s focus on Net Zero. Most people recognised that this is something MFRS must strive for morally, operationally, and to meet Government targets.

“It is necessary in this current world, sustainability is key.”

- 3.44 Those who were less positive acknowledged the need to address the climate emergency, but not at any cost or at the expense of safety. In light of the latter, several participants were concerned that the relevant technology is not yet available to ensure Net Zero can be safely achieved.

“Effectiveness and efficiency should be the prime drivers.”

“Need technology to match risk... Not sure technology is in place for firefighters to be net zero.”

“It’s possible for some elements but unlikely for some e.g. large vehicle or time taken to charge electric vehicles etc.”

Overall comments

- 3.45 Overall, there was strong support for all of MFRS’s CRMP 2024-2027 proposals.

“I wholeheartedly agree with all of MFRS’s focuses.”

“Really good proposals for effective use of resources.”