

Merger Engagement 2013/14

Date	Event/Location	MFRS attendees	Notes/outcomes
10/9/13	Deputy Chief Exec (DCE) met St Helens District Manager	DCE & Chris Case	Meeting at St. Helens
12/9/13	DCE met Wirral District manager	DCE & Paul Murphy	Meeting at Birkenhead fire station
17/9/13	Chief Fire Officer (CFO) met Louise Ellman MP	CFO	CFO briefed Louise on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
20/9/13	CFO addressed City Region Cabinet	CFO, D Appleton	Short presentation explained the challenges facing the Authority and potential options for mergers and/or closures. Mayor Anderson was supportive and understood the challenges. No support for seeking permission for increases in council tax beyond that allowed.
23/9/13	Meeting officers, Wirral BC	DCE	Initial meeting to look at options for sites for a potential station merger in the Wirral area
11/10/13	CFO addressed Merseyside MPs breakfast meeting	CFO	CFO briefed MP's on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
23/10/13	Visit to potential St. Helens sites	C Schofield, C Case	Visited a range of sites in the St. Helens area & evaluated their potential to house a new station & gain access to the main highway network.
4/11/13	Meeting	DCE & Colin Schofield	General meeting to discuss mergers.
6/11/13	Meeting re consultation	C Schofield, D Appleton	Approach explained and discussed. ORS forums, meetings with councillors, Formal consultation process also discussed.
6/11/13	Knowsley BC officers & Developer	C Schofield, G Oakford, A Subramanayam	Discussed options for the acquisition of a site in Prescot for a new fire station/blue light hub & discussed whether the Council had a 'Preferred Developer' for the site.
8/11/13	CFO met Shaun Woodward MP	CFO	CFO briefed Shaun on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
8/11/13	CFO met Angela Eagle MP	CFO	CFO briefed Angela on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the

			Authority to meet the financial challenge.
11/11/13	Meeting	DCE, Colin Schofield & Anantha Subramanayan	General meeting re mergers.
19/11/13	Members seminar	All	Options explained in detail. Members expressed a wish for council public forums to be added to engagement phase.
28/11/13	CFO met Stephen Twigg MP	CFO	CFO briefed Stephen on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
29/11/13	CFO spoke to Graham Burgess, Chief Exec, Wirral BC	CFO	CFO briefed Graham on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
3/12/13	CFO/136/13 to Authority		Agreed
4/12/13	Email to Carole Hudson, Chief Exec, St. Helens	C Schofield	Advised of the Authority resolution (3/12/13) & sought a meeting with the appropriate officers to attempt to identify potential sites for a station merger.
5/12/13	Estates & Procurement planning meeting	C Schofield, D Appleton, A Subramanayam, S Woods, C Atkinson, S Mathews	Discussions about engagement, consultation, procurement and building phases to assist in establishing project plan.
11/12/13	Fire Brigades Union (FBU) consultation	C Schofield, M Cummins	Opened consultation. Outlined Authority resolution & CFO delegated powers. Undertook to keep FBU advised & meet again after the initial communication/consultation phase was complete. FBU to nominate station representatives to liaise with CS.
11/12/13	Knowsley full Council, Huyton	CFO, G Oakford, C Schofield, D Appleton	Options presentation delivered. 20 minutes available. Attendees supportive. Questions "What do the FBU think of the options?" A - neither the FBU or Fire Authority wanted to make the changes, but that the FBU were being consulted and understood the need to change. Q - "What savings have and will be made from the back office?" A - significant savings have already been made from support staff and further savings will be made, but opportunities are

			limited as the budget spent on support staff is much smaller than that for firefighters Q - "What consultation will take place on the proposals?" A - full consultation will take place with stakeholders when firm proposals are agreed.
12/12/13	Wirral, meeting with Cllr Phil Davies Leader and CEO	CFO	Explained the options. Those present understood the challenges.
12/12/13	St. Helens Reporter article on cuts/mergers		Includes MP Shaun Woodward's comments on safety and job losses.
16/12/13	Eccleston ward councillors: Michael Haw, Geoff Pearl, Teresa Sims	CFO	First of a series of briefings this week with local politicians. Ward councillors to produce a newsletter on the options for local residents
18/12/13	Fire Officers Association (FOA) consultation	C Schofield, M Cummins	Opened consultation. Outlined Authority resolution & CFO delegated powers. Undertook to keep FOA advised & meet again after the initial communication/consultation phase was complete. Rob Pritchard to alert his members & seek comments
18/12/13	MFRA officers	C Schofield	Pre-meeting for Knowsley BC meeting on 19/12/13.
19/12/13	Knowsley BC officers re Prescott	C Schofield, A Subramanayam	Further discussions on options for the acquisition of a site in Prescott for a new fire station/blue light hub & established whether the Council had a 'Preferred Developer' for the site.
19/12/13	FOA chair email to FOA members on consultation	C Schofield	
20/12/13	NWAS officer	C Schofield, A Subramanayam	Discussed whether NWAS are interested in coming into any new merged station. Initial views – Prescott, yes but will recheck & advise by 6/1/14; St. Helens probably not; Greasby, strong possibility but will confirm by 31/1/14.
20/12/13	Meeting with Esther McVey MP + Cllrs Jeff Green & Lesley Rennie	CFO	CFO briefed Esther and the Wirral Conservative Leaders on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge with particular focus on the Wirral.
20/12/13	CFO addressed City Region Cabinet	CFO	CFO briefed the City Region Cabinet on the financial position of

			the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge.
23/12/13	CFO met Councillor Walsh, Knowsley	CFO	CFO briefed Frank on the financial position of the Authority, the challenges in 2015/16 and beyond and the options open to the Authority to meet the financial challenge with particular focus on the Huyton with Whiston merger.
8/1/14	Merseyside Police representative	C Schofield, S Woods, A Subramanayam	Discussed whether Police are interested in coming into any new merged station. Initial views – Prescott, yes (as previously advised but possibly less than originally proposed); St. Helens probably not but depends on site selected; Greasby, possibility but relatively small requirement
8/1/14	Wirral BC officer re Greasby	C Schofield, A Subramanayam	Discussed options & land ownership issues for a potential site in Greasby. Wirral to provide further details.
9/1/14	St. Helens BC officer	DCE, C Schofield, C Case	Further meeting to look at options for sites for a potential station merger in the St. Helens area. Two potential additional sites identified for further investigation.
9/1/14	NWAS officer		NWAS not now likely to be involved in Prescott
9/1/14	Presentation to St Helens Council members	CFO, DCE, C Schofield, D Appleton, C Case	One hour available so able to explain in more detail. Well received by those present. Questions about 1. Whether Newton would revert to whole time if mergers implemented (A – yes), 2. Have we considered co location? (A - yes, discussions are ongoing) 3. Will there be a capital receipt? will the Parr site be saleable? (A - yes there will be capital receipts, but this will be more in some places than others. Consideration will be given to the impact on the community of closing a station), 4. Some questions about the WT/retained model (A – The CFO explained the model in more detail) 5. Can we identify land (A – we are in the process of looking for land) 6. Would hospitals be suitably covered (A – yes, this is a key consideration). All answered to the satisfaction of the questioners. Comments included - “sounds sensible”, “best to look at the cover provided, not the stations”, “pragmatic”.
11/1/14	Wirral IRMP Forum	DCE, AM Platt, D Appleton, W Kenyon, C	Considerable support for mergers. Some support for closures and day crewing, very little for community retained. Engaged

		Schofield	<p>participants asked intelligent questions. Some clarification required from DCE and AM but not a great deal.</p> <p>SCORING THE SUPPORT FOR OPTIONS</p> <hr/> <p>SCORING SYSTEM</p> <p><i>EACH FIRST CHOICE = 3 POINTS</i></p> <p><i>EACH SECOND CHOICE = 2 POINTS</i></p> <p><i>EACH THIRD CHOICE = 1 POINT</i></p> <p><i>On this basis, the...</i></p> <p><i>WIRRAL FORUM SCORES were...</i></p> <p><i>ADDITIONAL LLAR = 33 POINTS</i></p> <p><i>USE OF COMMUNITY RDS = 1 POINT</i></p> <p><i>DAY CREWING = 5 POINTS</i></p> <p><i>STATION MERGERS = 75 POINTS</i></p> <p><i>STATION CLOSURES = 21 POINTS</i></p>
13/1/14	St Helens IRMP Forum	DCFO, AM Mottram, C Case, D Appleton, W Kenyon, C Schofield	<p>The presentation had to be shortened to fit the shorter timescale of the evening meetings and although it initially appeared that some relevant points had been omitted, these were picked up as questions by attendees and responses given by officers. Results were similar to Wirral but with less of a gap between LLAR and mergers.</p> <div data-bbox="1205 922 1727 1313" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 245px; width: 100%;"></div>
14/1/14	Liverpool IRMP Forum	DCE, W Kenyon, J Sutton,	<p>There were 25 people present.</p> <p>Once more, ORS initial interpretation of this and the “provisional</p>

			<p>interest” also recorded is that there was support for a package deal – with respective emphasis to LLAR, Mergers and Closures – with Day Crewing Community RDS a very long way behind. ORS were very frank about Liverpool stations – so they were well aware of that...</p> 
15/1/14	Knowsley IRMP Forum	DCE, AM Searle, G Oakford, P Hitchen, M Cummins, P Rushton, W Kenyon, C Schofield	<p>Fewer attendees at Knowsley, but still engaged. There is a need to weight both St Helens (20 attendees) and Knowsley (18 attendees) upwards because they generate fewer points than Wirral and Liverpool (with 25 attendees in both cases). In practice, the difference will not be huge – and definite priorities are emerging.</p>

15/1/14	Liverpool full Council	CFO, D Appleton, R Davis	CFO delivered 3 minute statement which was responded to by Mayor Joe Anderson who expressed support for the FRA and FBU. The main focus of Mayor Anderson's comments was the government cuts.	
16/1/14	Sefton IRMP Forum	DCFO, D Mottram, J Sutton, D Appleton, P Hitchen, M Cummins, R Pritchard	Well attended (23) with preferred option mergers, followed by station closures	
17/1/14	Wirral Council meeting	CFO, D Appleton, C Schofield	One hour meeting with Leader and Labour Group members. CFO explained the options. Councillors understood the situation the Authority is in. Questions mainly involved discussion on whether the merger at Greasby was the only option for Wirral and the CFO explained other options were possible, but Greasby was the optimum location for response and that it also opened up opportunities for partnerships. Asked about further consultation, CFO explained that following MFRA agreement of proposals we would come back to Councils for their views on the best ways to engage in line with our plan.	
21/1/14	Huyton local public forum (Council)	DCFO, W Kenyon, C Schofield, P Rushton, M Thomas	The meeting was organised and widely promoted to the public and community organisations by the Council and held at Huyton Suites from 4pm to 5pm on the 21 st of January. Five people attended, four of them from the council. Questions and Answers	

			<p>Q. Is the fact that we're a port taken into account by Government when providing fire cover? A. There is still an historical basis to the provision of fire services on Merseyside and as a result we are, by comparison with most other services, still well provided for. Coastline is a factor within the grant formula – however more people die in house fires in the UK than in Industry.</p> <p>Q. I live in Netherley and we've always had two fire engines. A. If you call in a house fire the nearest appliance is sent and a second one will be very close behind. We guarantee we'll be there within 10 minutes, but generally we will get there far quicker than that. The average response time to Knowsley is currently 5 minutes 22 seconds.</p> <p>Q What do you mean by merging stations? A It does mean we will be closing stations and we're being quite clear about that. I will explain the merger option further on, but in affect two older stations will be merged into one new station located somewhere between both to ensure the best response possible within the parameters set.</p> <p>Q What are the weekly hours for firefighters? A. Firefighters work 48 hours over an 8-day period – we have recently changed the shifts to increase productivity – so a fire fighter working the wholetime duty system will normally work 2 x 12 hour days followed by 2 x 12 hour nights followed by 4 days free from work (locally known as 2-2-4).</p> <p>Q Does the airport employ its own firefighters? A Yes, but if a plane was to come down outside the airport then we will respond and lead on the incident. The airport has limited resources.</p> <p>Q When a fire happens in the day it is easier to spot. At night it could be more difficult to see and take you longer to respond. A. Of course we do need cover at night and it is also important that we continue to do our community prevention work to reduce the number of fires.</p> <p>Q Are community retained firefighters trained in the same way</p>
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		<p>as wholetime firefighters?</p> <p>A Initially yes, but it is far more difficult to maintain their training and skills because they are not available as much during the week. Wholetime fire fighters undertake approximately 20hrs training a week – with a community retained fire fighter that reduces to between 2/3 hours.</p> <p>Q The proposed new Prescott station is going to be built on Manchester Road but there is nowhere to build on that road.</p> <p>A We haven't finalised a site yet or purchased any land for a new station. We want to go through a detailed consultation process and listen to what people say before we come back with final proposals.</p> <p>Q Why does a fire station have to have community facilities, why can't it be just a fire station? There are plenty of community centres.</p> <p>A Modern fire stations have many community facilities such as gyms which are used by local organisations. For instance, Wirral Heartbeat use our gyms which are often available and used by community groups.</p> <p>Q I don't really agree that Huyton has to be closed. It could be done up. I can understand why you wouldn't want to close Whiston. I am from Huyton.</p> <p>A I understand why you are suggesting that but we have to come up with the best solutions for everyone on operational response. I'm sure some people at Whiston will be saying the same thing.</p> <p>Q How many staff are you going to lose?</p> <p>A. We estimate we will have to lose around a further 150 posts and that includes support staff and firefighters.</p> <p>Q</p> <p>Is the change to when firefighters retire going to make any difference?</p> <p>A Not really, but we are concerned that if we don't do some recruitment over the coming years that we are going to end up with a skill gap in future years – the skill is to introduce</p>
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			<p>firefighters over a period of years to ensure competence in the long term.</p> <p>Q Do the possible job losses include advocates? We have some fantastic advocates doing great prevention work in Huyton and I wouldn't want to lose them.</p> <p>A I couldn't agree more - the work of our advocates is excellent We don't want to lose any of our staff but unfortunately we are dealing with realities – it is our intention to protect the frontline as best we are able - our excellent prevention staff are in my mind frontline.</p>
22/1/14	Whiston local public forum (Council) ST EDMUND ARROWSMITH, CENTRE FOR LEARNING.	DCFO, W Kenyon, M Thomas, K Mansfield	<p>One member of the public who has an interest in history and was a firefighter, three council officers and Councillor Tony Newman from Fire Authority attended. The council advertised it through community messaging – to 300 to 400 people in the area – and by contacting their contacts on all the community groups.</p> <p><u>Questions:</u></p> <p>Q: What was the percentage of staff lost during that time (when DCFO speaking about recent changes and CSR 2010)? (Question from councillor Byron).</p> <p>A: DCFO gave approximate figures but said he would have to come back to give the exact figures on that.</p> <p>Question on how many appliances would “we have” and whether community retained was “part-time firefighters” (DCFO said they are those with jobs in the day)</p> <p>Q: Where are you thinking of siting (the new station at Prescot) A: DCFO said in the Manchester Road area – Councillor Tony Newman added some further local knowledge of where it may be</p>

			<p>Q: Will prevention work continue at the same level? That work has made a difference.</p> <p>A: DCFO said the investment in prevention had got us where we are and the balance between prevention and operational staff had to be “right”. He said there was no way he wanted to “compromise” safety and recognized that the specialist teams do a lot of the preventative work.</p> <p>The member of the public spoke about not using “expensive” firefighters to install smoke alarms or do hydrant walks, after asking who did the hydrant checks, and perhaps pay a company or others to do these roles.</p> <p>A: Councillor Tony Newman said advocates do the smoke alarm fitting too and other home visit work and the Authority cannot afford to pay people to do the hydrant checks anymore. DCFO said in Merseyside between 3% and 10% of firefighters’ time was spent on calls, so there is time to undertake other work – training, preparedness and prevention activity. DCFO said he would much rather they go into schools or homes to carry out prevention work than just wait for calls.</p> <p>Q: On the money available for building new stations/efficiencies is that on a first come first served basis?</p> <p>A: DCFO said you have to bid for the money – DCLG have set aside £70million for invest to save projects.</p> <p>Q: If you relocate with police and ambulance (to Prescot), would they put money in? How advanced are the discussions with them?</p> <p>A: DCFO said yes and the discussions were quite advanced.</p> <p>The member of the public made the comment it was “annoying” you cannot set the budget to the Service.</p>
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23/1/14	Sefton Council meeting	CFO, P Rushton	Full Council meeting. One question on the number of PFI stations answered by CFO.
27/1/14	Met site owner in St. Helens	C Schofield, C Case, A Subramanayam	Options to purchase or lease potential site discussed.
27/1/14	Wirral Economy and Environmental Policy and Performance Committee meeting	CFO, C Schofield	<p>CFO delivered presentation on options to the Committee, together a number of other Wirral councillors in the public gallery. Then Q&A session.</p> <p>Q. What is average response time? A. 5 mins 15 seconds, pan-Merseyside</p> <p>Q. What impact would there be on average response times from a merged station in Greasby? A. Slight increase in Upton & West Kirby areas but decrease to the Greasby/Frankby area.</p> <p>Q. How will funding be achieved? A. Beauty contest for resources – more efficiencies = more resources.</p> <p>Q. Why has Merseyside received cuts twice the national average? A. CFO set out historical context – 1947 FS Act; National Standards of Fire Cover; attendance at A Risk in docks; declining population; change in funding mechanism etc</p> <p>Q. What is timescale for merger? A. Need to address now for 2015/16 cuts. Probably 18 – 24 months but depends on availability of land in Greasby.</p> <p>Q. Wouldn't Greasby location have significant effect on attendance times to Hoylake, particularly down narrow lanes? A. Potentially but so would a closure of West Kirby & there are no other alternatives.</p> <p>Q. What are the effects of cuts on Fire Safety initiatives such as free smoke alarms etc? A. 90 support posts already gone (many front line) & more to come. However, recent changes to firefighter work routine, agreed with FBU, improved efficiency & additional time generated for HFSC etc.</p>

