

## Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

### Equality Impact Assessment Form

<b>Title of policy/report/project:</b>	<b>Station Mergers , Closures and other Operational Response Options</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Strategy and Performance</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>EIA Stage 1 - 19.11.13</b>  <b>EIA Stage 2 – 31.1.14</b>  <b>EIA Stage 3 -</b>
<p><b><u>Scope of EIA</u></b></p> <p>The purpose of this EIA is to review information and intelligence available at an early stage in the development of options for station mergers and closures. It is intended that the EIA can be used to help inform decisions as the options progress and will help Principal Officers and Authority Members to understand equality related impacts on the decisions being made in relation to local diverse communities</p> <p>The EIA will be a living document which will developed further during the life cycle of the consultation stages. This initial EIA will provide be an opportunity to plan ahead for various activities such as community and staff consultation and equality data gathering</p> <p>The EIA will be conducted in a number of stages :</p> <p><b>Stage 1 – Desk Top Assessment by 3/12/13</b> :To provide Principal Officers with some initial thoughts on equality impacts arising from the Mergers and Closures Authority Report and provide an outline of what further data, research and consultation may be needed to inform the EIA fully in preparation for Community Engagement and Consultation Exercises in the new year (by 19/11/13)</p> <p><b>Stage 2 – Consultation External and Internal:</b> to gain feedback from those communities and MF&amp;RS Staff groups affected by the mergers and closures options to ensure equality impacts are considered throughout the process and included in the final version of the EIA for review by final decision makers (Dec 2013 onwards)</p> <p><b>Stage 3 – More detailed assessment on the local areas affected by options:</b> for Authority members to take into account at their meeting when they review the EIA in full. (By April 2014)</p>	

## **1: What is the aim or purpose of the policy/report/project**

*This should identify “the legitimate aim” of the policy/report/project (there may be more than one)*

The reports purpose is to provide Authority Members a number of recommendations for approval, subject to public consultation, around station mergers and closures as follows:

### Options for mergers

- Two stations on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton at Greasby)
- Two stations in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward)
- Two stations in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston which already has Authority approval)

In order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 13. These merger options, if approved, will deliver a reduction of 66 whole time equivalent (WTE) posts, reduce the Authority asset base down from 26 stations to 23 and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads

### Options for closures

The incremental move from whole time crewing to day crewing to whole time retained crewing of at least one appliance in Liverpool and/or Sefton, resulting in the closure of one or more station. This change in crewing and station closure, if approved, will deliver a saving of 22 WTE posts deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads

**The options for mergers and closures would not affect the local communities which live in and around the closure areas in relation to fire response times, they would remain within a 10 minute response time, and therefore this EIA will not focus on response times but around the following:**

- **The impact of the options and any changes (positive and negative) in relation to any particular equality groups of the local communities’ use of MF&RS services and stations**
- **The impact of options and any changes on staff affected by closures**

## **2: Who will be affected by the policy/report/project?**

*This should identify the persons/organisations who may need to be consulted about the policy /report/project and its outcomes (There may be more than one)*

Communities of Wirral , St Helens, Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley  
MF&RS staff affected by the mergers and closures

### 3. Monitoring

*Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include data which shows whether it is having the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.*

#### What monitoring data have you considered?

3.1 Profile of Merseyside and Demographics 2012 report -

[http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Profile%20of%20Merseyside%20\(Demography,%20Equality%20and%20Diversity\).pdf](http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Profile%20of%20Merseyside%20(Demography,%20Equality%20and%20Diversity).pdf)

3.2 Ward Demographics from Census 2011 - **Appendix A**

3.2 Profile of MF&RS staff -

<http://intranetportal/sites/smd/equalityanddiversity/Shared%20Documents/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20-%20Reports%20for%202012/Public%20Sector%20Equality%20Data%20Report%20-%20Published%20version.pdf>

Nb. The links above are only available to those with access to the MFRA network.

#### What did it show?

3.1 and 3.2 - The demographics in each of the districts is broadly similar with no significant differences to consider. (Significant being + or- 5% difference). To gain a greater understanding of the make-up of the local communities affected by the impact of the closures and mergers, demographics for the local wards broadly covered by each station have been produced in **Appendix A**

Notable highlights showing differences in relation to the average for each district area are as follows:

#### **Huyton**

Age Structure: The Huyton Station ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward; the wards of Longview and Page Moss have younger populations whilst the wards of Prescott West, Roby and Stockbridge in particular have older populations.

Socio Economic (including Disability): In Page Moss, Longview and Stockbridge wards in particular there are well above average levels of people with disability or long term health problems. Within these same wards there are proportionally high

levels of adult unemployment.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". Within the Huyton Station Area, the ward of Longview has above district average counts of BME population particularly "Asian/British Asian" persons.

### **Whiston**

Age Structure: The Whiston Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of Rainhill and Whiston North primarily have older populations whilst the wards of Prescot East and Whiston South have younger populations.

Socio Economic: There are no negative Socio Economic factors in the Whiston station ground.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". However BME populations are more diverse within this station ground with above average populations of "Asian/British Asian" in each ward and above average populations of "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" within Prescot East.

### **St Helens**

Age Structure: The St Helens Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of: Parr, Bold, Sutton, Thatto Heath, Town Centre tends to have younger populations - particularly Parr and Thatto Heath. By contrast the wards of: Billinge & Seneley Green and Blackbrook have older populations

Socio Economic: The wards of: Parr, Thatto Heath, Sutton and Moss Bank have higher than average levels of adult unemployment as well as having above average levels of disability / long-term illness in these wards.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". The wards of Town Centre and Thatto Heath (in particular) are the most culturally diverse with well above average counts particularly of "Asian/British Asian" residents. Both Wards also have above average counts of "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" people, though this is to a lesser extent to "Asian/British Asian" residents. St Helens has a significant Gypsy and Traveller community.

### **Eccleston**

Age Structure: The Eccleston Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The wards of Eccleston and Rainford (Rainford has one of the highest average population ages in Merseyside) have older populations whilst the wards of West Park and Windle have younger populations.

Socio Economic: The wards of Eccleston and West Park have slightly above average levels of unemployment within the Eccleston station ground. West Park also has slightly above average levels of long term sickness / disability.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White", Rainford and West Park have particularly low levels of BME residents. Within the Station Area the Ward of Eccleston has slightly above average BME population "Asian/British Asian" for and West Park has slightly above average counts "Black /African /Caribbean/ Black British" residents.

### **Upton**

Age Structure: The Upton Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. Pensby & Thingwall, Greasby, Frankby - Irby and Claughton have older than average populations.

Socio Economic: Generally within the Upton Station there are no particularly significant Socio Economic issues, with the Exception of the Bidston & St James

ward which primarily rests within the Upton Station Ground. Bidston and St James have well above average adult unemployment and levels of long term health problems / disability.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White". Claughton and Bidston & St James have the most diverse populations with above average counts of "Asian/British Asian" residents.

**West Kirby**

Age Structure: The West Kirby Station Ground has a mix of age groups depending on the ward. The demographic for the wards of Hoylake & Meols and West Kirby & Thurstaston is much older than the Wirral average.

Socio Economic: There are no negative Socio Economic factors in the West Kirby station ground.

Racial Profile: Within the Station Ground the predominant ethnicity grouping is "White".

**3.3- Staff Demographics for Operational Staff**

95% of operational uniformed staff are Male and 5% are Female

65% of operational uniformed staff are aged 41 to 50

5% of Operational staff have declared a Disability or Long term health condition

3% of MF&RS staff are Black Minority Ethnic the remainder are classed as White

**4: Research**

*Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy/report/project. This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc*

**What research have you considered?**

4.1 A review of the Access Audit report - results for the stations affected by options

**What did it show?**

The Equality Act 2010 replaced and enhanced the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) 1995 & 2005. It sets out the legislation for Public Bodies to make reasonable adjustments to premises to enable disabled people to access all services and fully participate in public life. MF&RS has conducted access audits for all its stations (except new builds) and is in the process of reporting on the results and recommendations to the Authority in December 2013.

The Audits have highlighted significant access issues for the stations identified in the mergers and closures options with a total of **£ 267,875** cost for making them more accessible

<p>Review of MF&amp;RS Community Profiles for station areas affected by proposals to help understand the type of communities who may be affected by the options and consider their needs.</p> <p>A review of current Partnership agreements for stations affected by proposals to help understand the impact of station closures /mergers on those service users</p>	<p>Community Fire Stations. It has been an important factor when considering the options and proposals for station mergers and closures and the building of new stations.</p> <p>Currently being worked on ready for Stage 2 of the EIA</p> <p>Currently being worked on ready for Stage 2 of the EIA</p>
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## 5. Consultation

*Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above) Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation*

### What Consultation have you undertaken?

No Consultation has taken place at Stage 1 of this EIA, however consultation is proposed to take place in two stages to scrutinise the OPTIONS and consider others. As such it is proposed to enter into consultation comprising of a) a more open-ended listening and engagement phase on the OPTIONS and b) a Formal consultation process on the eventual PROPOSALS. Part of the consultation process will take into account the needs and experiences of those equality protected groups who have been deemed to be affected by the mergers and closures.

Consultation specifically with Protected Groups (as required by the Equality Act 2010) in relation to this EIA and its assessment of the mergers and closures report /options is currently being planned by the Diversity and Consultation Manager. A number of cost effective options are being considered within the time frame available including :

- The development of a new MF&RS Diversity Consultation Forum ; a public voice for diverse groups across each district
- Using the 2 stage consultation process mentioned above to consult on the EIA with representative groups from those protected groups affected by the Options and subsequent proposals (where representation is available )
- Consultation with Community Groups currently using the Stations identified as potentially being closed and merged – Impact on equality
- Making the EIA accessible via the Staff Portal and MF&RS Webpage to enable staff , stakeholders and the public to make comments and provide feedback easily

## What did it say?

To follow with Stage 2 and 3

### Stage 2 Engagement and Consultation January 2014

Stage two of the EIA involved engaging members of the public on the current EIA findings in relation to the Mergers and Closures options ,specifically the 5 options provided to the Public Engagement Forums held in January 2014.The possible options discussed at the for further financial savings :

1. Additional “Low Level Activity and Risk Stations ( LLAR)
2. Introduction of “Day Crewing” at some whole time stations
3. Introduction of “Community Retained “ (RDS) stations
4. Merger of pairs of older stations and their replacement by modern community fire stations
5. Closure of some stations without replacement

Five forums were held across each of MFRS District :

- Wirral - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2014 – 10.00am -1.30pm
- St Helens - Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014 – 18.00pm -20.45pm
- Liverpool – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014 – 18.00pm- 20.45pm
- Knowsley – Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - 18.00pm – 20.45pm
- Sefton – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014 – 18.00pm – 20.45pm

Part of the engagement presentation included canvassing views from the forum on the impact of each of the 5 options in relation to protected equality groups. The forums were broadly representative of the current demographic profiles for each district when compared to the demographic reports for each district, with the exception of Ethnicity for Wirral, St Helens and Sefton.

**Table 1 – Equality Monitoring breakdown for each District engagement forums**

	WIRRAL	ST Helens	LIVERPOOL	KNOWSLEY	SEFTON
<b>Gender</b>	Male: 12	Male: 10	Male: 13	Male: 10	Male: 13
	Female: 11	Female: 11	Female: 12	Female: 6	Female: 9
<b>Age</b>	18-34: 5	18-34: 3	18-34: 7	18-34: 3	18-34: 4
	35-54: 7	35-54: 9	35-54: 10	35-54: 7	35-54: 8
	55+: 11	55+: 9	55+: 8	55+: 6	55+: 10
<b>Social Grade</b>	AB: 6	AB: 4	AB: 6	AB: 2	AB: 6
	C1: 8	C1: 7	C1: 9	C1: 3	C1: 5
	C2: 4	C2: 3	C2: 4	C2: 6	C2: 3
	DE: 5	DE: 7	DE: 6	DE: 5	DE: 8
<b>BME</b>	0	0	2	1	0
<b>Disability</b>	6	6	6	3	0

Members of the Forum were given a summary of the outcomes from the EIA stage one, and asked if there were any specific concerns about those outcomes and indeed any of the 5 options. No concerns about the options were raised in any of the Forums, the general view was that the favoured option chosen by the members; mergers and closures, would provide a positive opportunity for members of the Disabled community and those elderly residents with limited mobility to access new station for community events and activities more easily than some of the current stations. The building of new stations would benefit many minority community groups who may have limited access to community spaces.

Stage 3 of the EIA will now involve consulting with the Public Proposals which will include consultation with specific organisations who support specific Protected Groups through various consultation methods.

## **6. Conclusions**

*Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy/report/project impacts or could impact on people from the following protected groups? (Include positive and/or negative impacts)*

### **(a) Age**

The needs of different Age groups, especially those minority age groups, in relation to station mergers and closures options and proposals are difficult to fully assess at this early stage of the EIA. Section 3 and 4 sets out the current age profiles which should be considered when taking into account possible options for closures and mergers. Engagement and consultation will provide more opportunities to assess negative and positive impacts and results will be used to inform Stage 2 and 3 of this EIA.

### **(b) Disability including mental, physical and sensory conditions)**

The building of new stations will be positive for the disabled communities affected by the station mergers as the development of new high functioning stations will enable disabled people to access community services delivered from Fire Stations.

### **(c) Race (include: nationality, national or ethnic origin and/or colour)**

*As a) above but in relation to Race and Minority ethnic groups*

### **(d) Religion or Belief**

*As a) above but in relation to Religion and Belief and minority faith groups*

### **(e) Sex (include gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity)**



As a) above but in relation to Gender and Gender Reassignment

**(f) Sexual Orientation**

As a) above but in relation to the needs of minority sexual orientation groups

**(g) Socio-economic disadvantage**

As a) above but in relation to the needs of those most affected financially (if at all) by any mergers and closures.

## 7. Decisions

*If the policy/report/project will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how it will change or why it is to continue in the same way.*

*If no changes are proposed, the policy/report/project needs to be objectively justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aim set out in 1 above.*

### EIA Stage 1 – Decisions

On reviewing the research and data available for stage 1 of this EIA, there are no significant equality Impacts established so far with the exception of Disability, where current stations earmarked for mergers are currently not fully accessible for disabled community groups.

It is important to note that the impact of the Mergers and Station Closure Options and subsequent Proposals will not impact on any members of the public disproportionately in relation to the current level of service received by these groups e.g. response times and fire safety , prevention and protection services

### EIA Stage 2 – Decisions

The outcomes of the Engagement forums across the 5 Districts has identified no particular negative impacts that need to be considered in any of the 5 Options. The Merger and Closure option appears to be the most positive for a number of minority equality groups in terms of accessibility to community spaces.

### EIA Stage 3 – Decisions

To Follow

## 8. Equality Improvement Plan

*List any changes to our policies or procedures that need to be included in the Equality Action Plan/Service Plan.*

## 9. Equality & Diversity Sign Off

***The completed EIA form must be signed off by the Diversity Manager before it is submitted to Strategic Management Group or Authority.***

Signed off

Wendy Kenyon

Date:

19.11.13- EIA Stage 1

31.1.14 – EIA stage 2

### Action Planned

**Actions Identified during EIA stage 1**  
9.1 Consultation with Staff , Stakeholders and Communities , in relation to the EIA and its assessment of the Mergers and Closures

### Responsibility of

Diversity and Consultation Manager (DCM) with Support from IRMP

### Completed by

Jan-April14

<p>Options and subsequent Proposals ; specifically those Protected groups and the potential impact ( both negative and positive )</p> <p>9.2 Analysis of Community Profiles for station areas affected to understand the types of communities affected by the Mergers and Closures Options and subsequent Proposals</p> <p>9.3 Equality analysis of those staff affected by the Options and subsequent Proposals to see if any particular protected group are affected disproportionately.</p>	<p>Officer</p> <p>Business Intelligence Manager and DCM</p> <p>DCM with support from POD</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
<p><b>Actions Identified during EIA stage 2</b> Consider ways to engage further with members of different Ethnic communities when proposals are identified for consultation on in Stage 3 of the EIA</p>	<p>WK</p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p><b>Actions Identified during EIA Stage 3</b> TBC</p>		
<p>For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the <a href="mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk">DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk</a> or on 0151 296 4237</p> <p><b>The completed form along with the related policy/report/project document should be emailed to the Diversity Team at: <a href="mailto:DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk">DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk</a></b></p>		