

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	10 APRIL 2025		CFO/95/25
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DAVE MOTTRAM		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, MARK THOMAS	REPORT AUTHOR:	STATION MANAGER, JOHN O'BOYLE
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	CHANGES IN OPERATIONAL RESPONSE FURTHER TO THE EMERGENCE OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS AND ENERGY SYSTEMS		

APPENDICES:	NONE	
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of MFRS' response to the emergence of Alternative Fuels and Energy Systems (AFES).

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report and accompanying presentation.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will recall the significant incident at a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Carnegie Road, South Liverpool attended by MFRS fire crews in September 2020.
4. The incident raised concerns over a number of significant risks to emergency responders, the public and the environment posed by rapidly emerging energy technology, and in particular the fire risks relating to Lithium-ion batteries and storage systems and what processes can be undertaken to manage those risks.
5. Whilst the responsible persons for the site at the Battery Energy Storage System in Carnegie Road worked with the Service to adopt additional measures to enhance protection and warning on the site, the use of lithium-ion batteries and potential risks are not limited to energy sites with the Service experiencing several domestic property fires occurring as a result of lithium-ion batteries which have sadly led to fatalities. A child as young as 8 lost their life in such a fire in August 2024.
6. Work across the sector is being conducted to learn more about alternative fuels, any risks to the public and firefighters it may present and identify best practice in

respect of responding to such incidents. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Operations Committee established an AFES Lead Officer, who reports to the Technical Response group, to determine issues from developing technologies and the broader potential across all Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), including:

- a) Membership of the European special interest group for BESS incidents. Sharing documentation and investigations of note.
 - b) Liaison with United States of America (USA) and Australian contacts regarding BESS sites.
 - c) Exploring the impact of the Government White Paper on MFRS across all functions.
 - d) Exploring the impact of AFES on firefighter safety, public safety and the environment.
 - e) Consideration for other emerging AFES such as hydrogen in the home and vehicles.
7. The North-West FRS Operations and Resilience Emerging Technologies Group (NWORET) has also been established under the NW Operations Group with the following terms of reference:
- a) Identify advancements in construction/industry involving emergent technologies which pose significant risks within the NW region.
 - b) Build awareness and understanding of the risks posed and collectively combine knowledge and experience, review policies for operational response, training and equipment.
8. There is an accompanying presentation to this report to be delivered to Members by Group Manager John O'Boyle which will detail the changes facing the fire sector and how the Service responds to incidents following the emergence of alternative fuels.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising out of this report.

Staff Implications

10. There are no staff implications resulting from this report.

Legal Implications

11. The Authority has a duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, s.6 to provide safety advice to the public and the continued scrutiny of emerging alternative fuels and any associated risks assisting officers in determining strategies for future prevention work.

12. The Authority has a legal duty of care for its employees to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees including creating safe systems of working. As new technologies emerge, the Authority must ensure that reasonable and appropriate measures are adopted as part of its obligations to enable the Service to respond to any such incidents.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Risk Management & Health and Safety Implications

14. The Authority will manage its risk in respect of operational response through shared learning, safe systems of working which may impact on how the Service can respond to new and emerging risks

Environmental Implications

15. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. Any environmental impact from the scrutiny topic will be detailed within the presentation.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

16. This report provides evidence that enables officers to develop and enhance strategies designed to keep our communities safe.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NONE