

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	27TH MARCH 2014	REPORT NO:	CFO/023/14
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CFO STEPHENS	REPORT AUTHOR:	CFO STEPHENS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	AM SEARLE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE NATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS DURING THE RECENT WIDE AREA FLOODING		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the recent out of area deployments of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) personnel and national assets in response to wide area flooding in Lincolnshire, Essex, Somerset and Thames Valley.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the contents of this report.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that the Authority hosts a number of National Resilience (NR) assets which were provided by the Government as part of the New Dimensions programme introduced following the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11th September 2001.
4. These assets include an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team, an Incident Response Unit (IRU) and Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) vehicle for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Conventional Explosive (CBRNE) response and a High Volume Pump (HVP) for response to wide area flooding.
5. In addition to these NR assets the Authority also has 5 Type B boat rescue teams declared to the National Asset Register and a rescue Hovercraft and Jet Skis.
6. The Authority receives a crewing grant from DCLG to support the USAR team along with a training and consumables grant to support on-going skill maintenance for all 3 capabilities.

7. The Authority does not receive any funding towards the 5 Type B boat rescue teams but did receive a one off grant to purchase 2 of the boats and training for the crews. The rescue Hovercraft was purchased from income received from members of the Search and Rescue Team (SRT) providing safety cover on the Runcorn Bridge.
8. On 5th December 2013 the Authority received a request from the Fire and Rescue Service National Coordination Centre (FRSNCC) to deploy 2 Type B boat rescue teams to Lincolnshire to support the response to the East Coast tidal surge. This request was received at 2054hrs. At 2311hrs a request was received from FRSNCC to deploy a further 2 Type B boat rescue teams to Essex. The teams deployed to Lincolnshire were mobilised to Boston fire station where they stood by during the high tide on the morning of 6th December ready to respond in support of Lincolnshire FRS colleagues. The teams at Boston were released from the incident to return to Merseyside at 1044hrs that morning. The teams deployed to Essex were stood down at 0149hrs 6th December whilst en route to Clevedon fire station.
9. On 2nd January 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC to deploy 2 Type B boat rescue teams to Somerset to support the response to wide area flooding across the County. This request was received at 2107hrs. The teams responded to a Strategic Holding Area at Deane Services on the M5 at Taunton. From there they were mobilised to Cheddar fire station where they stood by during the high tide on the morning of 3rd January ready to respond in support of Devon and Somerset FRA colleagues. They were released from the incident to return to Merseyside at 0906hrs that morning.
10. On 30th January 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC to deploy the rescue Hovercraft and 5 swift water rescue technicians to Somerset to provide aid to villages which had been cut off by flood water since 2nd January. This request was received at 1347hrs. The teams responded to a Strategic Holding Area at Deane Services on the M5 at Taunton. From there they were mobilised to Martock fire station where they undertook reconnaissance operations along with colleagues from Gloucestershire FRA who also deployed a Hovercraft in support of Devon and Somerset FRA. The team remained in Somerset until the morning of 1st February when they returned to Merseyside.
11. On 1st February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC to deploy the HVP to Somerset to support Devon and Somerset FRA and the Environment Agency pump water from the Somerset Levels. This request was received at 1527hrs and was for the HVP to arrive at the Strategic Holding Area at Deane Services on the M5 at Taunton by 1300hrs 2nd February. At 0500hrs 2nd February the HVP and two HVP operators deployed to Deane Services arriving at 1056hrs. From there the HVP was deployed to commence pumping operations on the Somerset Levels. At the time of writing the Merseyside HVP remains engaged in pumping operations in Somerset however the personnel deployed with the HVP returned to Merseyside on 2nd February.
12. On 8th February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC to deploy a crew of 5 HVP trained personnel to Taunton Fire Station in Somerset. The

request was for the crew to arrive by 1600hrs 10th February 2014. The crew departed Merseyside at 1038hrs, arriving at approximately 1500hrs. The crew carried out pumping operations on the Somerset Levels over the course of the next 3 days. The crew were stood down on 13th February and arrived back in Merseyside at 1524hrs.

13. On 12th Feb 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC to deploy a fire appliance with a crew of 5 to Maidenhead Fire Station in support of Royal Berkshire FRA. The appliance deployed at 2325hrs, arriving at 0356hrs. As the personnel deployed were from the SRT and therefore all swift water rescue trained they were utilised as a Type B boat rescue team carrying out community reassurance duties. The crew were stood down at 1037hrs 17th February and returned to Merseyside at approximately 1500hrs.
14. On 13th February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC for a Flood Tactical Advisor to attend the SHA in Reading by 0900hrs 14th February. The Merseyside Tactical Advisor arrived at 0800hrs and assisted in the coordination of the relief operation. The advisor was stood down on Monday 17th February and travelled back to Merseyside that day.
15. On 14th February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC for 2 Flexi Duty Officers (Station Managers) to attend the SHA in Reading in support of Royal Berkshire FRS. The Officers were to be in attendance by 0900hrs 15th February in order to provide operational cover and resilience to Royal Berkshire FRS. A further request was made for a Flexi Duty Group Manager to arrive at 0900hrs 17th February. The Group Manager and 1 Station Manager returned to Merseyside on 20th February. The remaining Station Manager returned on 23rd February.
16. On 15th February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC for a Flood Tactical Advisor to attend the FRSNCC. The Officer deployed on the morning of 15th February arriving at the FRSNCC early afternoon. The Officer provided technical advice on the overall management of the flood assets until being relieved and returning to Merseyside on 18th February.
17. On 16th February 2014 at 0300hrs the Authority received a request from FRSNCC for a crew of 5 HVP trained personnel to attend the SHA in Reading in support of Royal Berkshire. The crew deployed at 0500hrs and arrived at approximately 0900hrs. The crew conducted pumping operations throughout the Reading area until returning to Merseyside on 23rd February.
18. On 17th February 2014 the Authority received a request from FRSNCC for a Type B boat team to deploy to the SHA in Royal Berkshire. The Team deployed at 0632hrs and arrived at 1142hrs. The team were utilised to undertake search and community reassurance operations until returning to Merseyside on 20th February.
19. On 17th February 2014 the Authority received a further request from FRSNCC for 1 fire appliance and 5 crew to deploy to the SHA in Reading for 0900hrs 18th February. The crew deployed at 0402hrs and arrived at the SHA at 0900hrs.

The team were utilised to undertake search and community reassurance operations until returning to Merseyside on 21st February.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. There are no equality and diversity implications contained within this report.

Staff Implications

21. All of the personnel deployed with the water rescue assets are from the SRT therefore have retained contracts issued to enable them to undertake out of area deployments.
22. Two members of staff deployed with the HVP work the Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system so are also retained contract holders although they are not issued specifically for the purpose of out of area deployments. The remaining members of staff who deployed with the HVP volunteered to respond.
23. Officers will consider in detail any staff implications which arise from the debrief of each deployment and take any action necessary to improve the out of area deployment processes adopted by the Authority.

Legal Implications

24. There are no direct legal implication contained within this report however the deployments are vital to the health and safety of communities in other areas and as well as fire-fighters and other agencies' staff.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

25. The costs incurred by the Authority for each of the deployments detailed within this report will be reimbursed by the requesting FRS who themselves will seek to claim back the money from the Government through the Bellwin scheme.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

26. All MFRA personnel deployed on out of area operations are trained and competent in the use of the NR and other water rescue assets owned by the Authority.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

27. The experience gained by MFRA personnel on out of area deployments develops their skills and competence which enhances the response they are able to provide when responding to incidents on Merseyside.
28. The MFRA response, whilst not directly benefiting Merseyside, provides significant assistance to the communities in the affected areas.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CBRNE	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and conventional Explosive
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DIM	Detection Identification and Monitoring
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service (not Merseyside)
FRSNCC	Fire and Rescue Service National Co-ordination Centre
HVP	High Volume Pump
IRU	Incident Response Unit
LLAR	Low Level of Activity and Risk
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
NR	National Resilience
SHA	Strategic Holding Area
SRT	Search and Rescue Team
USAR	Urban Search And Rescue