

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 SEPTEMBER 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/13/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ADVISOR, MICHELLE KIRK
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	STAFF SURVEY 2024 ACTION PLAN		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: STAFF SURVEY 2024 ACTION PLAN		

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the ongoing consideration by the Strategic Leadership Team of the key findings following the staff engagement survey 2024 and to propose actions for continued improvement. (The full set of reports can be found at <https://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/about/staff-survey-results/>).
2. If agreed, the content of this report will be used as a summary for staff on the intranet Portal and in the Hot News staff magazine.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the content of this report; and
 - b) approve the action plan attached at appendix A.

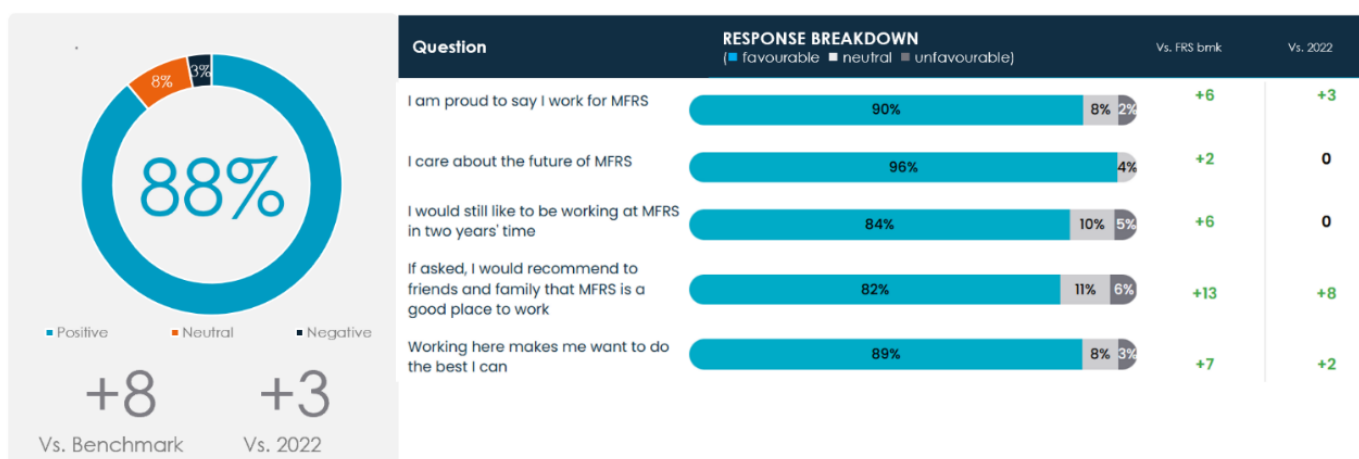
Introduction and Background

4. Members will be aware that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service ('the Service') has conducted a comprehensive staff engagement survey since 2014, making the commitment to carry out a staff survey every two years and using the previous survey as a benchmark for trend analysis and improvement.
5. The sixth staff engagement survey took place from 11th November 2024 to 20th December 2024 to monitor engagement levels and gather information about staff experiences at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority').

6. Through the delivery of the sixth survey, we have been able to benchmark our staff engagement progress against the results from the 2022, our earlier surveys in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020 and against other clients (including Fire and Rescue Services) of our survey facilitators, People Insight.
7. People Insight delivered a high-level presentation of our results to staff and members of the Authority on 28th January 2025, and the full set of staff survey results have been released through the Service staff Portal.
8. The following section provides a summary of the highest and lowest results for the whole organisation, showing theme, question, response rates and engagement scores. It also goes on to show a visual of the top five results with the biggest improvements and the lowest five results.

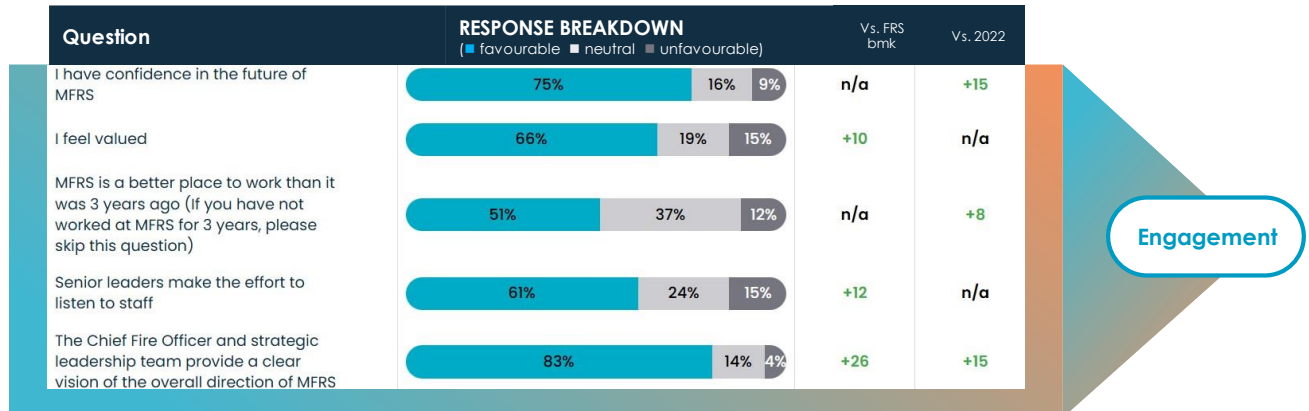
	2024	2022	2020	2018	2016	2014
Response rate	41%	32%	63%	56%	51%	68%
Engagement score	88%	86%	88%	75%	74%	55%

9. 41% (422) of Authority staff completed the survey, an increase of 9 percentage points from 2022, but lower than previous figures.
10. Our overall engagement score for the 2024 staff survey is 88%. This is outstanding performance and well above the norm. The diagram below shows the five key areas which are used to calculate our overall engagement score.



Key drivers —

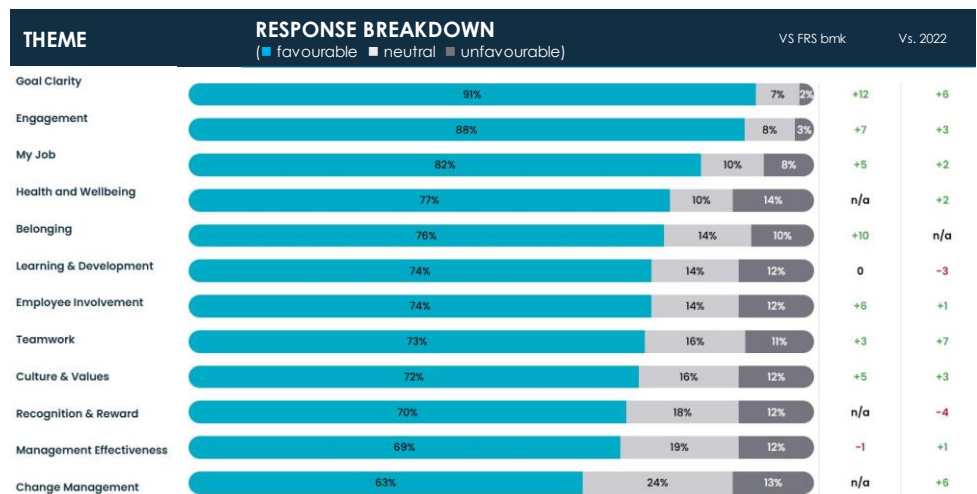
These 5 items have the strongest relationship with engagement. biggest impact on our engagement score. If a question has a **high score, celebrate and maintain** it; if it is a **low score, consider this is an action for improvement**



Survey Themes

Back on track results

- Themes primarily jumping back up to some of the strengths we saw a few years ago
- Themes primarily back on being above the FRS benchmark
- Two themes slightly below the external FRS benchmark



Highlights



Highest scoring

Question	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (■ favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)	VS FRS bmk	VS 2022
I understand how the work I do helps MFRS to achieve its Purpose	95% favourable, 4% neutral, 1% unfavourable	+8	0
I understand our Vision, Our Purpose, Our Aims and Our Values	95% favourable, 4% neutral, 1% unfavourable	+12	+7
I am aware of the support services available through the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team	94% favourable, 6% neutral, 0% unfavourable	n/a	-2
I know what I should do and what action I should take if I was concerned that bullying and harassment were taking place	94% favourable, 5% neutral, 1% unfavourable	n/a	+2
I have a good understanding of MFRS's expectations of staff behaviour	93% favourable, 5% neutral, 2% unfavourable	n/a	n/a



Most above the FRS benchmark

Question	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (■ favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)	VS FRS bmk	VS 2022
The Chief Fire Officer and strategic leadership team provide a clear vision of the overall direction of MFRS	83% favourable, 14% neutral, 4% unfavourable	+26	+15
I understand our Vision, Our Purpose, Our Aims and Our Values	95% favourable, 4% neutral, 1% unfavourable	+12	+7
Senior leaders make the effort to listen to staff	61% favourable, 24% neutral, 15% unfavourable	+12	n/a
I feel valued	66% favourable, 19% neutral, 15% unfavourable	+10	n/a
I am able to use my own initiative at work (where appropriate to do my job)	86% favourable, 9% neutral, 5% unfavourable	+9	+1

Peopleinsight

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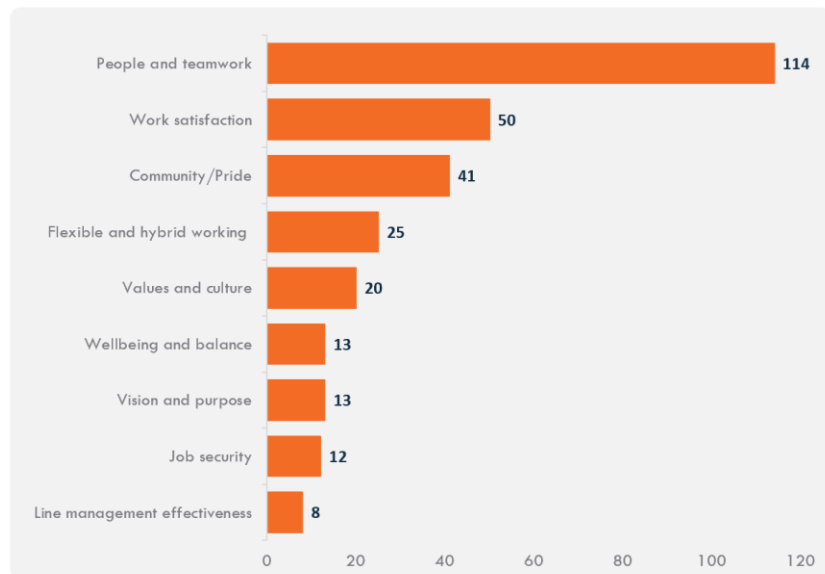
11. A free text question was asked “What is the best thing about working at MFRS”. People insight has provided a useful summary of those results:

“Huge feeling of pride whenever i put the uniform and speak to our communities. they recognise we are a trusted organisation and are happy to engage with us whenever they get the chance.

“There is generally a good atmosphere and providing you engage, there is plenty of opportunity to get involved with things, including community activity, volunteering and development provided it is relevant to ones role

“The people - I enjoy working with my team and the wider team. Everyone supports one another and makes time to listen.

“The job is varied, interesting and exciting at times. There are a lot of decent, moral and honest personnel



Lowlights



Lowest scoring



Most below the FRS benchmark

PeopleInsight

Question	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (■ favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)			VS FRS bmk	Vs. 2022
Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority engage well with staff at MFRS	40%	36%	24%	n/a	+1
I feel that MFRS consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions	44%	32%	24%	n/a	0
MFRS helps staff prepare for and cope with change	46%	35%	19%	n/a	+4
Senior managers do what they say they are going to do	49%	32%	19%	n/a	+1
MFRS is a better place to work than it was 3 years ago (only for those that have worked here 3 years ago)	51%	37%	12%	n/a	+8

Question	RESPONSE BREAKDOWN (■ favourable ■ neutral ■ unfavourable)			VS FRS bmk	Vs. 2022
I feel MFRS treats people fairly, regardless of individual differences (e.g. ethnic background, gender....)	71%	14%	15%	-2	-5
My line manager gives me regular feedback on how I am doing	69%	18%	12%	-2	-1
My line manager treats me fairly and with respect	88%	9%	3%	0	-1
I have good quality equipment to help me do my job	69%	18%	13%	0	-9

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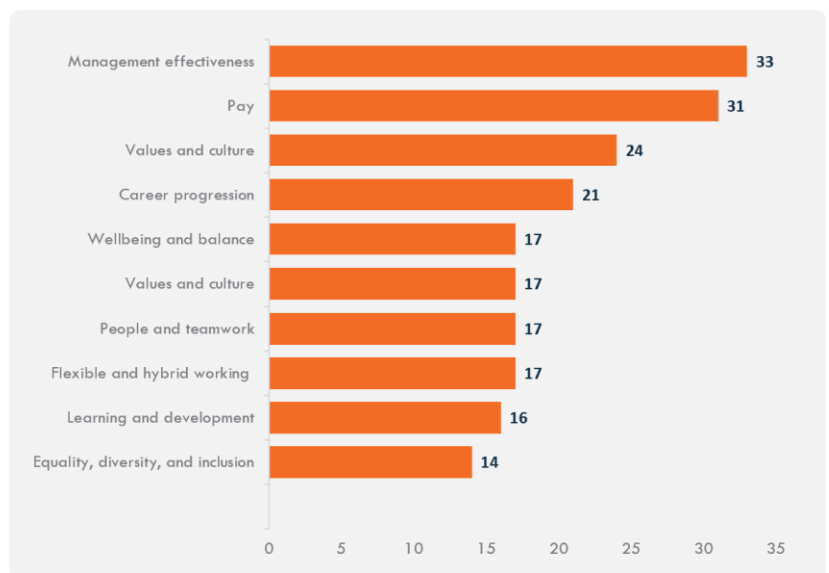
12. A further free text question was asked "If you had the chance to change one thing at MFRS, what would it be?" The common fields were profiles by People insight as follows:

.... that senior managers have better training in people management. Most problems are caused by poor people skills and communication

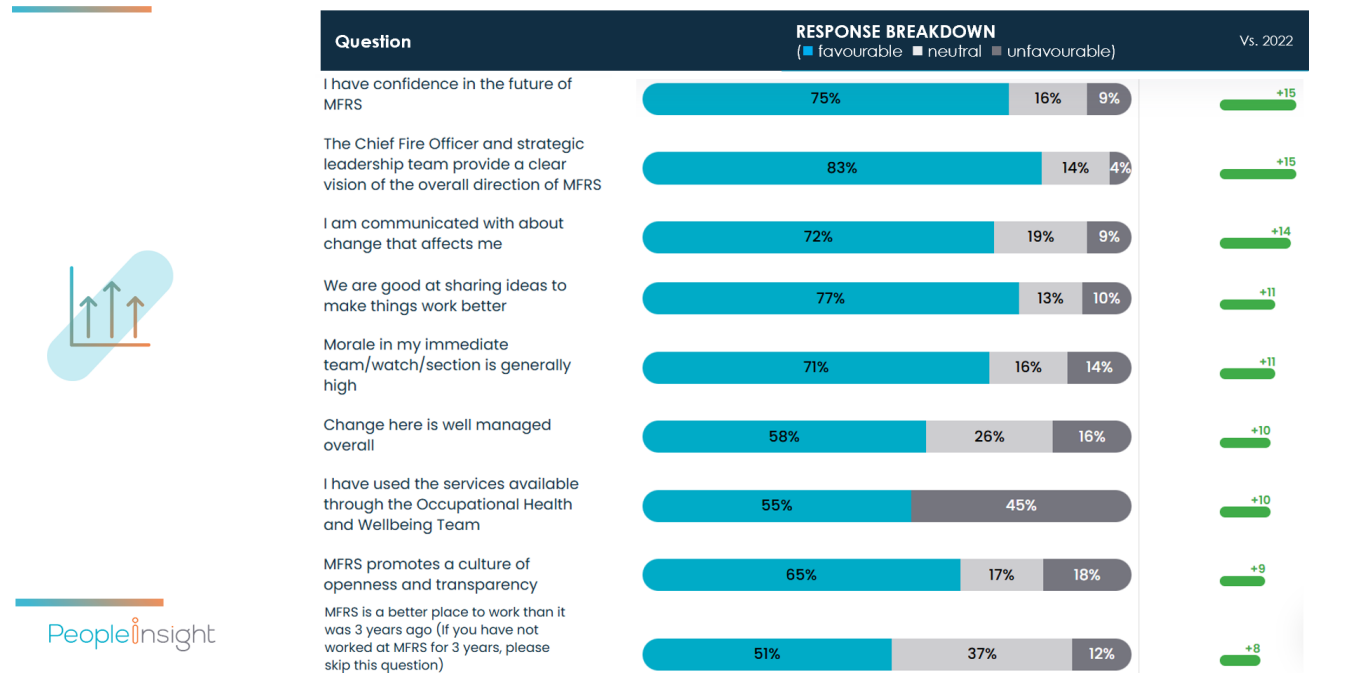
SM to be in charge of station or function not both. Poor work life balance and conflicting demands from GM's

Pay scales and holiday allocation. These are very dated and need to be looked at again with regards to life/work balance and morale at work. The grading is also very dated.

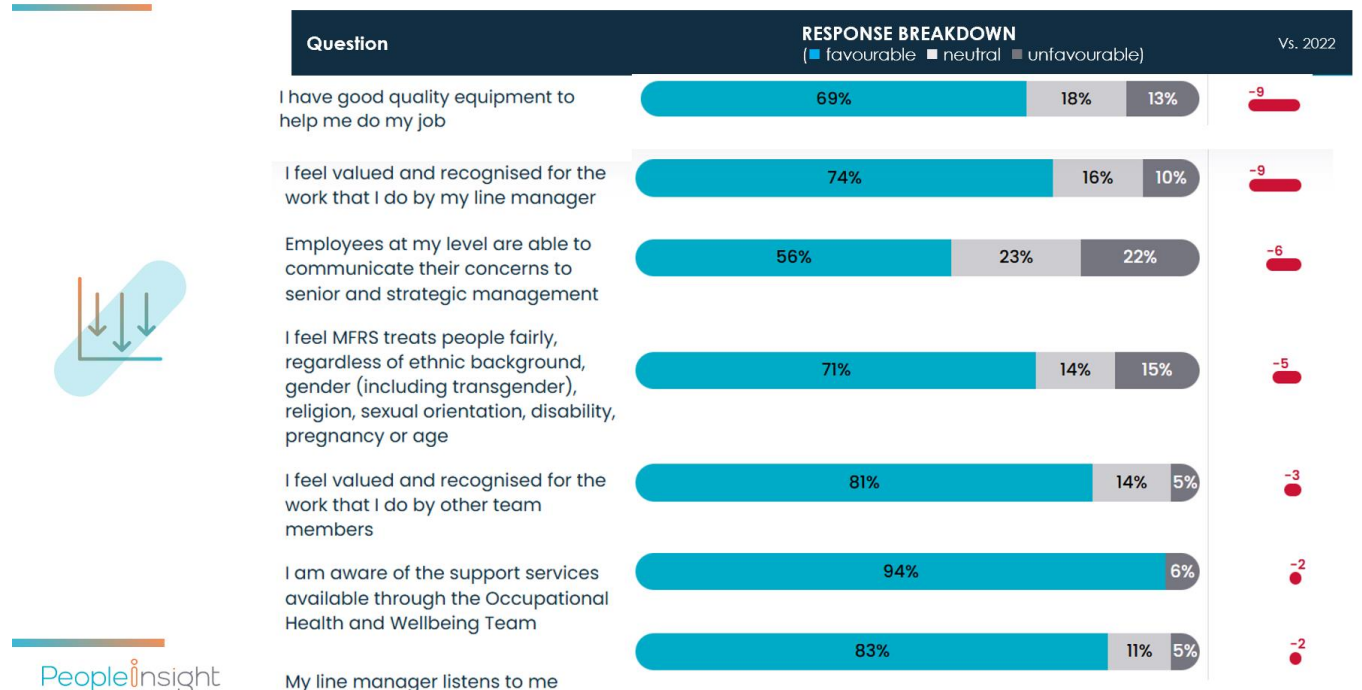
...reviewing its established way of doing things and communicating with subordinates - directing v enabling, informing v consulting, and being more willing....to explain the rationale behind certain systems, processes and decisions. The culture of explaining things by saying, 'that's just how it gets done', or, 'it's already been decided', or 'don't shoot the messenger' could be done with a tweak or two.



Most improved since 2022



Most declined since 2022



Lowest scoring questions with 2022 comparison

These 5 items are the lowest scoring in the survey

Question	Impact	Theme	Response Favourability	Comparison
Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority engage well with staff at MFRS		Management Effectiveness	<div><div>40%</div><div>36%</div><div>24%</div></div>	+1
I feel that MFRS consider the impact on me and other people when making decisions		Change Management	<div><div>44%</div><div>32%</div><div>24%</div></div>	0
MFRS helps staff prepare for and cope with change		Change Management	<div><div>46%</div><div>35%</div><div>19%</div></div>	+4
Senior managers do what they say they are going to do		Management Effectiveness	<div><div>49%</div><div>32%</div><div>19%</div></div>	+1
MFRS is a better place to work than it was 3 years ago (If you have not worked at MFRS for 3 years, please skip this question)		Culture & Values	<div><div>51%</div><div>37%</div><div>12%</div></div>	+8

Favourable Neutral Unfavourable

Our lowest scoring questions are the same as the last survey

People insight confirm this is a common trend, they may shift but may still remain in the bottom 5 or 10

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13. In summary, the following highlights are notable:

Positives to build on – since the last survey

- An 88% employee engagement score surpasses the People Insight external benchmark, and the Services top quartile position has been retained
- It is encouraging to see the response rate grow by 9 percentage points
- Strong understanding of our vision, purpose, aims and values
- Staff feeling valued
- Confidence in the future of MFRS
- Senior leaders make the effort to listen to staff
- Staff would recommend that MFRS is a good place to work
- The CFO and SLT provide a clear vision of the overall direction of the Service

Areas of to focus on in the future are:

- Celebrate and maintain key drivers
- Lower response rate than some earlier surveys
- Participation – response rate by protected characteristic groups
- Review how engagement varies by demographics/functions
- Consideration of how change is managed
- Notable hotspots by demographics

Next Steps

14. The Strategic Leadership Team ('SLT') have reviewed the results and cascaded results to their own Functions. This gave opportunities for staff to provide further feedback, which helped SLT to identify areas for further improvements and create the attached actions. These actions will be built into our future planning processes and will be added to the current Functional Plans. We will also consider the introduction of shorter more frequent "pulse" surveys during 2025/26 in response to staff feedback and to ensure we have up to date information.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The staff survey positively supports Equality and Diversity within the Service. The questions used within the survey consider staff satisfaction in relation to culture, staff engagement and the wider Equality and Diversity. People Insight have provided equality reports for the survey results by gender, ethnicity, age etc. These reports are available on the website and will be analysed separately. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed alongside the action plan to review the proposals and to ascertain their impact on members of staff in terms of equality.

Staff Implications

16. The survey is an invaluable opportunity for staff to express their opinions about how engaged they feel with the organisation. The survey has been well received, and it is hoped that lessons learned from that survey will have improved staff engagement and satisfaction in the period in which the survey took place.
17. It is acknowledged that although the response rate is broadly in line with that of other Fire and Rescue Services, it could be improved, and officers will consider any barriers to participation and alternative methods of collecting information about staff engagement.

Legal Implications

18. The staff survey supports the Authority in complying with the Equality Act 2010 - Public Sector Equality Duties. Being aware of the engagement levels and satisfaction levels of staff groups will help the Authority to target any changes and improvement required.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any future changes or projects as a result of the survey will be reported on separately.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

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20. There are no health and safety, risk management implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

21. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

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.*

22. The survey measures staff engagement levels which are important. These levels may have a bearing on the levels of performance and standards across the organisation including service delivery. Understanding issues staff may have and responding to them positively to improve engagement may, in turn, support any improvement in service delivery.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
SLT	Strategic Leadership Team