

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	17 OCTOBER 2024	REPORT NO:	CFO/61/24
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	DEB APPLETON JACKIE SUTTON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN GROUP, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	CRMP 2024-27 POST-CONSULTATION REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 1:	CRMP 2024-27
	APPENDIX 2:	PUBLIC FORUM CONSULTATION REPORT
	APPENDIX 3:	ONLINE SURVEY REPORT
	APPENDIX 4:	COMMUNITY GROUP CONSULTATION EVENT FEEDBACK
	APPENDIX 5:	FBU CONSULTATION RESPONSE
	APPENDIX 6:	FOA CONSULTATION RESPONSE
	APPENDIX 7:	EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members, consider the outcomes of public/stakeholder consultation on the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-27 and to seek approval for the publication of the final post-consultation version which takes account of consultation feedback (amendments are shown in red) as attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note that the actions within this CRMP have been subject to extensive public consultation (the outcomes of this consultation have been attached as appendices to this report);
 - b) consider whether the responses to consultation have been adequately considered by Officers and are reflected within the CRMP 2024-27 (Appendix 1), where appropriate. (For ease changes from the draft CRMP are highlighted in red)
 - c) approve the CRMP for 2024-27 and its implementation - which will result in
 - i. Further increases in fire engine availability (32 to 34) building on the 2021-24 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
 - ii. Quicker response times.

- iii. An improved response to life risk incidents.
 - iv. Quicker mobilisation.
 - v. Improvements in the way we mobilise our specialist capabilities removing any delay in our response.
 - vi. More targeted Prevention and Protection activities and;
- d) approve the CRMP 2024-27 for publication on the website on 17th October.

Introduction and Background

3. It is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018 to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan ('IRMP').
4. The Authority has previously noted the change in terminology from IRMP to CRMP and this CRMP has been written to ensure compliance with the National Framework.
5. Each plan must:
 - a) Reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority.
 - b) Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources.
 - c) Outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks; set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat.
 - d) Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework.
 - e) Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners and;
 - f) be easily accessible and publicly available.
6. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's (MFRA) CRMP is a medium-term plan that considers risk, demand and vulnerability and the progress made as a result of previous IRMPs to capture future aspirations and the strategic direction for the Authority in order to deliver the Service's Vision – 'To be the best Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, One Team, Putting its Communities First.'
7. The CRMP deals in a strategic way with the implications of risk, demand and vulnerability in Merseyside, in the context of the resources available to the Authority.

8. Subject to approval of the CRMP 2024-27, the Chief Fire Officer will exercise his delegated responsibility in the management of any changes resulting from it.
9. Future reports to the Authority will contain the detail on any such changes resulting from the CRMP.

Consultation

10. Since the draft CRMP 2021-24 was approved at the Budget Authority meeting on 29th February 2024 a twelve-week consultation process has taken place (4th March to 27th May) and the outcomes from this are summarised below and reported within Appendices 2 to 7.
11. The consultation process included the following:
 - a) Publication of the draft CRMP 2024-27 on our website
 - b) Publicity regarding the launch of the consultation process was published on the Authority website, Portal, Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor and X
 - c) One public forum for all districts of Merseyside (33 people took part). This followed the five initial public engagement forums that took place in October 2023 (previously reported to the Authority)
 - d) Distribution of the CRMP to over 100 strategic partners and other interested parties
 - e) Distribution of the CRMP to community contacts and a meeting with those contacts (17 people attended)
 - f) Meetings with staff Representative Bodies – Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Fire Officers Association (FOA), UNISON and UNITE
 - g) Principal Officer talks with staff and engagement with Staff Network Chairs
 - h) Senior officers discussing the plan with partner organisations
 - i) An online questionnaire on our website for the public and staff (69 responses)

Public Forum

12. Opinion Research Services (ORS) an independent research company were commissioned to facilitate an all-district public forum to consider the proposals in the draft CRMP 2024-27. ORS's role was to recruit and facilitate the meeting and report outcomes and ORS worked with MFRA to prepare supporting material for the meeting, providing the fullest possible information for participants.
13. MFRA has had an extensive programme of engagement with residents for a number of years and, in this context, ORS has regularly facilitated district-based and all-Merseyside forums. Within this on-going framework, MFRA has conducted 'listening and engagement' and 'formal consultation' meetings.
14. The all-district consultation forum followed on from the five district-based public engagement forums carried out in October 2023 where the public were asked if they considered how the Authority planned for Risk, Demand and Vulnerability was fair and reasonable. The forums also revisited the Authority's Planning

Principles which were originally endorsed by the public in 2016 (and discussed in subsequent years) and these were used in planning the CRMP. The full ORS consultation forum report can be found at Appendix 2.

15. Consultation forums of this type are used because they enable the Authority to engage in a meaningful way with a cross section of representative members of Merseyside communities as demonstrated below:

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	GENDER	AGE	WORKING STATUS	LIMITING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY	ETHNIC GROUP
Knowsley: 8 Liverpool: 8 Sefton: 7 St Helens: 3 Wirral: 7	Male: 17 Female: 13	16-34: 5 35-44: 5 35-54: 10 55-64: 6 65+: 7	Working full- or part-time: 22 Not working/ retired: 11	5	White British: 28 BAME: 5

16. In summary the ORS report states “There were very high levels of agreement with all of the Service’s CRMP 2024-27 proposals, as outlined below:

All 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:

- Work in areas of higher risk to educate and inform the communities in those areas on known and foreseeable risk and the actions they can take to make themselves safer (31 strongly agreed).
- Work with partners to plan for/respond to the emerging threat from fires involving alternative fuels (31 strongly agreed).
- Target Prevention work toward those most likely to die in a fire and the areas of highest deprivation (30 strongly agreed).
- Keep fire engines ‘on the run’ by crewing them with three firefighters to non-life risk incidents until four firefighters become available through overtime or moves from other stations (29 strongly agreed).
- Enhance its water rescue capabilities through introducing either a sub-surface drone or a diving team (25 strongly agreed).

32 of 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:

- Introduce ‘enhanced mobilisation’ via a pre-alert system (28 strongly agreed).
- Continue to assist the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) in relation to cardiac response and expanding this to people who have had falls (28 strongly agreed).

- Use the new Training and Development Academy for national and international training (28 strongly agreed).
- Increase fire engine numbers from 32 to 34 to increase resilience for high demand periods (27 strongly agreed).

31 of 33 participants agreed that MFRS should:

- Use improved technology in its Control Room (28 strongly agreed).
- Introduce a new framework for fire safety-related enforcements and prosecutions to improve public safety (27 strongly agreed).
- Reintroduce a Small Fires Unit to help when there are large numbers of lower level (not life-risk) incidents (25 strongly agreed).

17. There was slightly lower, but still strong, agreement with MFRS working with the Home Office on the programme to refresh current National Resilience assets (30 of 33 participants agreed, 21 strongly); using its Watch Managers differently to carry out different duties that add value and respond to incidents in a different way (29 of 33 participants agreed, 12 strongly); and focusing on Net Zero (27 of 33 participants agreed (17 strongly). This is perhaps as these are seen as 'internal' fire and rescue service issues that the public cannot or should not influence."

Online Questionnaire

18. An online questionnaire was available on the MFRS website. The results report is attached at Appendix 3. The questionnaire asked respondents for their views on the reasonableness of proposals in the draft CRMP. A large majority of respondents felt the proposals were reasonable, with some including comments and suggestions. That feedback has been considered and some changes have already been made to the CRMP. Other unrelated comments will be considered during the implementation phase or separately during the delivery of the plan, should the CRMP be approved by the Authority.

The summary of results is as follows:

- **Increasing Resources and Improving Response** (proposals 1 to 5) – 78.26% thought the proposals were reasonable (2.9% didn't know)
- **Working Smarter** (proposals 6 to 8) – 76.82% thought the proposals were reasonable (5.8% didn't know)
- **Adding Value in Merseyside** (proposals 9 to 12) – 82.61% thought the proposals were reasonable (5.8% didn't know)
- **The Wider Picture** (proposals 13 to 15) – 81.16% thought the proposals were reasonable (7.25% didn't know)

19. There was also some general feedback about the document itself with 89.55% of respondents finding it easy to read. That said, efforts have been made to further simplify the document.
20. Of the 69 respondents to the online survey, two thirds were men, two thirds were aged over 35 and a quarter were from people with a disability. Over 80% of respondents were of a white ethnic origin and over 70% of responses came from members of the public. Between 11% and 16% of respondents answered “prefer not to say” to the diversity monitoring questions.

Community Group consultation event

21. An event was held with representatives of a number of community groups that MFRS has been building relationships with during the last year as part of the Service’s approach to “knowing our communities”. This event provided valuable feedback on the CRMP but also more generally in relation to the accessibility of Service documents (see Appendix 4). Although the CRMP and the previous IRMP have been written in plainer English than previous plans and feedback suggests the majority of people find it is easy to read, there is more the Service can do to make documents even more accessible. Officers will investigate how they can do this in the coming months, including considering the use of Easy Read.
22. Overall those involved in the sessions welcomed the proposals.

Staff consultation - Principal Officer Talks

23. The Principal Officers delivered talks about the CRMP proposals to staff during the development of the draft CRMP and the consultation period. Staff were encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions and complete the online survey. There were some general areas of interest arising from the feedback with a number of positive comments, with more detail requested in relation to the following proposals:
 - The increase from 32-34 fire engines
 - Enhanced mobilisation
 - Training/TDA
 - Water rescue/underwater capability
 - Emergency Medical Response/NWAS
 - Maximising appliance availability
 - Watch Managers’ roles
 - Small Fires Unit
24. The CRMP actions have been amended to reflect a number of the points raised by our staff.

Staff Representative Bodies

25. Consultation meetings took place with all representative bodies.

26. The FBU's response (Appendix 5) raised a number of points relating to the CRMP which have been considered and changes have been made to the CRMP actions as outlined in the final version. Some other comments and recommendations did not relate specifically to this CRMP, but instead, are more general matters that will be picked up through the Service's normal representative bodies consultation and engagement processes.
27. FOA's response (Appendix 6) was generally supportive of all proposals, with a wish to be involved in the implementation and it included some comments on the format of the CRMP, which have been considered. However, they did raise some questions over Action 8 the proposal to use our Watch Managers differently to carry out different duties that add value and respond to incidents in a different way. These comments have been acted on in the final version.
28. UNISON have not submitted a written response but were supportive of proposals during the consultation meeting.
29. UNITE were supportive of the proposals during the consultation and commented:

"I have read the draft CRMP. I have nothing to submit. As for how it reads it is easily understandable and easily to navigate and not overly technical an awash with abbreviations making it easily digestible for the public consumption".
30. As a result of the feedback received the revised CRMP actions are as follows:

Action 2. Re-introducing a Small Fires Unit

"Following consultation, we would use the Small Fires Unit during known peaks in demand periods e.g. periods of hot weather and the bonfire period. Its introduction will be subject to the benefits and improvements being cost effective or affordable."

Action 3. Protecting our fire engine availability for life risk incidents

"Sometimes fire engines become unavailable at short notice (e.g. staff sickness). In order to respond to these situations, we will implement a number of changes to ensure we respond as quickly as possible to any absence, thereby ensuring that the fire appliance remains available to respond to life risk incidents."

The following additional information has been added to the CRMP:

"We will maximise our fire engine availability whilst protecting life risk resources. Following consultation, we can confirm that this proposal will avoid a fire engine becoming 'unavailable' to respond. This means we will be able to provide an even better service to the public in an emergency. Our response model will remain as described in this CRMP and our previous Integrated Risk Management Plan, but we will be more agile in how we use our resources. In order to remove the number of

occasions when appliances would be unavailable, we will utilise our retained staff more effectively, whilst also reviewing our current processes of moving staff between fire stations in order to make them more efficient and effective.

This proposal will keep fire engines available. By doing this we can avoid bringing fire engines in from further afield, unnecessarily leaving other parts of our communities without 'life risk' fire cover. We will also give permission for off going staff to remain on duty through the provision of an overtime budget/or reallocate duties for a short period to keep the fire engine available with four firefighters (enabling them to continue to respond to life risk incidents) whilst we are bringing in replacements from elsewhere. We will pilot this approach over the first 12 months of the plan to ensure its effectiveness."

Action 4. Enhancing water rescue capability through introducing either a sub-surface drone or a dive team.

We have added *"We will investigate the costs and benefits of these approaches."*

Action 8. Using Watch Managers to carry out different duties that add value whilst responding to incidents in different ways

"Following mixed feedback on the benefits of this proposal (from some staff and our staff representative bodies) we will undertake work to develop this action further during the first year of the plan.

The proposed way of working is currently used in different fire and rescue services in the UK and Europe, and we will use what we learn from them to help us understand the benefits and potential pitfalls prior to any implementation.

We will include our staff and our staff representative bodies in this work and its introduction would be subject to a successful pilot."

Consultation with Partners

31. The CRMP and the online survey were sent to over 100 partner organisations, but the Service did not receive any formal responses. It is possible that some partner organisations have responded through the online survey, but the breakdown of respondents does not indicate that is the case.

Equality and Diversity Implications

32. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for the CRMP and is attached at Appendix 7. This has been reviewed following the consultation and contains references to the consultation outcomes, including an action to further consider accessibility of organisational documents, but the CRMP has not been materially altered as a result of the consultation process.
33. EIAs will also be completed for actions within the CRMP prior to implementation where appropriate.

34. The information provided in the EIA explains the ways in which different protected groups may be affected by the aims and objectives set out in the CRMP supplement, specifically the planned changes resulting from the reinvestment in services. It is believed that the actions contained within the CRMP offer benefits to all groups within our communities.
35. The public forums, when considering the proposals presented to them, were reminded to consider the nine protected characteristics, plus socio-economic disadvantage which the Authority also includes. They believed the proposals were advantageous to all protected groups.
36. There were some comments in the online survey regarding organisational culture, which is a top priority for MFRS as demonstrated within the People Plan that appears elsewhere on this Authority agenda. Those comments will be further considered as part of the implementation of that plan. One respondent expected to see people-related actions within the CRMP, but as Members will be aware, the People Plan is considered a more suitable vehicle for setting out such actions and following approval the CRMP, People Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan will be published together on the website.
37. Some respondents suggested that a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion was not necessary, but MFRS believes it is vital to focus on this area for the benefit of communities and staff.

Staff Implications

38. As detailed in the preceding sections, extensive staff engagement has taken place before and during the consultation period and engagement will continue as actions are developed and implemented.
39. There will be training implications resulting from the CRMP and these will be identified and considered as the actions are implemented.

Legal Implications

40. MFRA continues to discharge its statutory duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and by having regard to and complying with the National Framework for England 2018 by the actions detailed in this report and attached appendices.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

41. Financial implications of the CRMP will be considered during this financial year 2024/25 and the development of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan in February 2025/26. As work progresses on the actions within the CRMP any other costs and savings will be thoroughly considered as part of the decision-making processes around implementation of those actions.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

42. The CRMP is based on a thorough assessment of community risk as detailed in the plan. Any risks associated with the implementation of the actions will be identified as part of the delivery of those actions and mitigation put in place as necessary. This includes any risks associated with Health and Safety.

Environmental Implications

43. The final action within the CRMP is the Authority's commitment to work towards achieving Net Zero by 2040. The environmental implications of other actions will be considered during the implementation process and will feed into the Net Zero action.

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.*

44. The CRMP is a key document by which Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority manage its resources with full consideration of the impact on risk to life for the people of Merseyside. This document details the actions we intend to take to achieve our Vision and Aims.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**

MFRS **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**