MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	**AUTHORITY**		
DATE:	**26TH JANUARY 2017**		**CFO/003/17**
PRESENTING OFFICER	**DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	**AM JAMES BERRY TEL: 4711**	**REPORT AUTHOR:**	**AM JAMES BERRY**
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	**FINANCE, PROCUREMENT, ICT, ESTATES, COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT, LEGAL.**		
TITLE OF REPORT:	**COMMUNITY RISK INTERVENTION SERVICES**		

APPENDICES:	**N/A**	

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members that Community Risk Intervention Services (CRIS), formerly the Fire Support Network Charity/Foundation, ceased trading as from 16th December 2016.

Recommendation

2. That Members;
   a. Note that CRIS ceased trading from 16th December 2016.
   b. Note that CRIS were commissioned by the Authority to carry out fire prevention and risk mitigation services for the Service, as such it is inevitable that the loss of these services will have a detrimental impact on the number of Home Fire Safety Checks and other interventions carried out by the Authority.
   c. That the closure of the Charity was necessary due to the cuts to public sector spending (Fire and Local Authority) and the requirements placed on the Authority to set a balanced budget.

Introduction and Background

3. CRIS have provided a commissioned service for MFRA since January 2002 (when working under the auspices of 'the Friends of the Fire Service').

4. CRIS has been a valued partner of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) and during that time has made a considerable contribution, not only to the priorities of the Authority but, to those of the wider communities of Merseyside.

5. The work of CRIS staff (both paid and volunteers) has included the installation of smoke alarms, de-cluttering, providing access to work for the most vulnerable, running summer camps, removing bonfire material or installing safety equipment

and they have always been fully committed to the work of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, particularly when assisting those who are less fortunate and vulnerable.

6. Along with many other charities CRIS have found themselves under ever increasing financial pressure.

7. At the same time MFRA has had to demand higher levels of productivity and accountability and as such have had to consider in detail the overall funding that is available to support the work of CRIS beyond that already provided by the Authority. This has been difficult but necessary and the Authority has tried to explore a multitude of options to continue to support their services, as have other supporters of CRIS.

8. It is against a backdrop of financial austerity that CRIS have faced a diminishing demand for their services. This is not because the demand isn't there as it is evident it is given a number of high profile incidents that have occurred recently; rather the funding is simply no longer available.

9. As a result the Board of CRIS has made a decision to cease trading as the financial support for them and many other charity and third sector organisations is no longer available.

10. This report acknowledges the work of the charity's trustees, staff and volunteers, who have had a remarkable impact across Merseyside and they will have saved numerous lives during their service.

11. Organisationally the Authority will have to consider how to deal with the vacuum left by CRIS. Officers have commenced work on proposals which would enable costs to be reduced whilst maintaining some capacity.

12. 'Volunteer growth' has been captured within the 2017-2020 IRMP.

13. In the short term Officers will seek to re-establish a volunteer model and explore how the Authority could further increase apprentice provision in light of the apprenticeship levy.

14. Fittingly CRIS were formally recognised for their contributions in making Merseyside safer by the Chair of the Authority and Deputy Chief Fire Officer through the provision of certificates of recognition.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. None contained within this report,

Staff Implications

16. At this time some of the requests for service that had previously been fulfilled by CRIS are being addressed by MFRS Staff on other duties.

17. It has been agreed that internal MFRA vacancies will be open to CRIS staff for a period of three months.

18. Support will be provided to CRIS staff in order to afford them the best possibility of securing a role elsewhere i.e. CV Writing and interview skills.

Legal Implications

19. CRIS has informed MFRA that the decision to cease trading has been discussed and ratified at its Board meeting.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

20. The commissioned service provided by CRIS was £195,000 per annum.

21. Costs incurred by CRIS have been re-charged to the CRIS account

22. Any future capacity building should be funded through savings identified above.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

23. Potential to leave low risk referrals un-managed could increase the Authority risk profile.

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

24. By continuing to deliver low risk home fire safety checks and engage with volunteers MFRA will continue to educate the communities about the risk of fires in the home. More fire safe communities reduce the potential for fires resulting in less calls for emergency fire and rescue service resources.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRS	MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FSN	FIRE SUPPORT NETWORK
CRIS	COMMUNITY RISK INTERVENTION SERVICES