

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO: Meeting of the	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE
DATE:	11TH JULY 2013
REPORT NO.	CFO/087/13
REPORTING OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DAN STEPHENS
CONTACT OFFICER:	AM SEARLE
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GM LONGSHAW
SUBJECT:	NATIONAL RESILIENCE ASSURANCE OF MFRA USAR CAPABILITY

THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

***A Glossary of Terms is provided at the end of the report for information.**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a summary of the findings determined by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) following their recent assurance and audit of MFRA' USAR capability.

Recommendation

2. That Members note the contents of this report.

Introduction & Background

3. MFRA are one of 18 FRSs in the UK who host an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team. The MFRA USAR team are based at Station 19 – Croxteth.
4. The National USAR capability coordinators within NRAT conduct periodic assurance visits of every USAR team to gather evidence specific to the assurance objectives and to measure that evidence against the identified assurance criteria.
5. The purpose of the assurance process is to confirm that the statutory duties outlined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 in relation to National Resilience assets can be met by the FRS hosting USAR teams. The process also assists NRAT in producing an annual report which through the National Resilience Board will provide assurance to government that all National Resilience assets allocated for a USAR response are capable of responding to a national scale incident with the required amount of competent personnel and with equipment that is operationally fit for purpose.

6. The process also provides an efficient and accurate tool for producing factual information on which the FRS can act to improve its performance.
7. The process uses a system of conformity or non-conformity to categorise the various levels of compliance with the assurance process criteria. It also records areas of the process that can be identified as being an opportunity for improvement and similarly areas considered to be notable practice.

Summary of Assurance Process

8. The USAR assurance process accords with the established principles contained within the Fire and Rescue Operational Assessment Toolkit and as such has pre-determined Key Areas of Assessment (KAAs) against which conformity/none conformity is established. The USAR KAAs are:
 - **Prior to call preparation.**
How well prepared is the FRS in its ability to mobilise USAR assets to an incident?
 - **Calls to mobilising control and support to the incident.**
How effective are the FRS in mobilising USAR assets and providing the relevant information required en route?
 - **En route, decisions and actions on arrival.**
How well do USAR personnel undertake the relevant actions both en route and on arrival at an incident?
 - **Deployment of attributes.**
How well do USAR teams integrate in to the Incident Command System and operate on scene in order to achieve the objectives of the incident?
 - **Monitoring and review.**
How well do the FRS monitor and review incidents and exercises?
9. In all 5 of the areas listed, MFRS achieved a conformity rating.
10. The process identified the following areas of notable practice:
 - Level of safety training delivered to USAR team members. All USAR team members are IOSH qualified with Watch Managers being NEBOSH qualified.
 - The use of the Operational Monitoring Team in providing feedback and actions post major incident/exercise.
 - The integration of the USAR capability as part of MFRS' front line emergency response.
 - MFRA' proactive use of the National Resilience Assurance Toolkit hosted within the National Resilience website.
 - MFRA' provision of personnel in excess of the National standard that facilitates the ability to support major incidents within the region for more sustained periods.
11. A copy of the final report can be made available to Members if required.

Equality & Diversity Implications

12. None contained within this report.

Staff Implications

13. None contained within this report.

Legal Implications

14. The findings from the assurance process confirm that MFRA IS meeting the requirements of:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 – section 9
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 – Articles 3, 4 and 5
- FRS National Framework Document – section 3.4

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. In sustaining high standard of response in regards to its USAR capability; MFRS will continue to receive grant support from central government to maintain and support said capability.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. MFRA' continued high standards in regards to USAR training acquisition and skills maintenance ensures that our personnel are best equipped and resourced to support local, regional and national scale incidents.

Contribution to Our Mission – To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Fire fighters”

17. The high standard of operational of operational readiness of the Merseyside USAR team as confirmed through the USAR assurance process contributes directly to making Merseyside safer from collapsed structure and heavy transport incidents and provides for enhanced safe systems of work at this type of incident for Firefighters.

Glossary of Terms

FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
IOSH	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
KAA	Key Area of Assessment
MFRS	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
NCAF	National Coordination Advisory Framework
NEBOSH	National Examination Board for Occupational Safety and Health
NRAT	National Resilience Assurance Team
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue