

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	JOINT POLICE & FIRE COLLABORATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20TH OCTOBER 2015	REPORT NO:	CFO/088/15
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER	REPORT AUTHOR:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP MERSEYSIDE POLICE PRINCIPAL OFFICER TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ENABLING CLOSER WORKING BETWEEN THE EMERGENCY SERVICES CONSULTATION RESPONSE		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A	MFRA CONSULTATION RESPONSE
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Purpose of Report

1. To propose a response from the Authority to the Government consultation on 'Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services' issued on 11th September 2015.

Recommendation

2. That Members approve the response as set out at Appendix A.

Introduction and Background

3. On 11th September the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Home Office (HO) and the Department for Health (DH) issued a consultation document entitled 'Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services'.
4. The consultation arises from the Conservative manifesto commitment "*we will enable fire and police services to work more closely together and develop the role of our elected and accountable Police and Crime Commissioners*" and was launched with the following narrative;

The government believes that greater joint working can strengthen the emergency services and deliver significant savings and benefit for the public.

It has already invested over £70 million to help drive blue light collaboration projects. Although there are many good examples locally of joint working between the emergency services, the overall picture remains patchy and much more can be done to improve taxpayer value for money and the service to communities. For example, the majority of fire and police boundaries are already co-terminus. Whilst this could have led to joint estates, over half of police stations in England are separate but within 1km of a fire station.

5. The consultation consists of 16 questions covering a range of areas specific to Merseyside FRA including;

- A new duty on all three emergency services to actively consider collaboration opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
 - A power for Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the duties and responsibilities of fire and rescue authorities where a local case is made (and creation of a single employer facilitating shared back office and streamlined management); and
 - A power for Police and Crime Commissioners to have representation on fire and rescue authorities where the authorities continue to exist.
6. The consultation also proposes the abolition of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and giving the Mayor direct responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service as will be the position in Greater Manchester.
 7. Responses to the consultation are to be submitted no later than 23rd October 2015. The Government intends to issue a response to the consultation at a future date however at this point there is no indication of the Government's expectations about the timescale for pursuing any of the measures being consulted upon.
 8. The proposed Merseyside FRA response is attached at Appendix A for consideration by Members.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been undertaken on any of the options under consultation at this time.

Staff Implications

10. Staff have been made aware of this consultation through the Message of the Day function on the staff Portal and encouraged to read the document, discuss it with their manager and submit an individual response if they wish to.

Legal Implications

11. Any legal implications would need to be considered by Government on the conclusion of the consultation process.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. A full financial analysis has not been undertaken on any of the options under consultation at this time.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

13. Any risk management, H&S and environmental implications have not been considered within this report.

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

14. Achieving the most appropriate governance structure for the FRA will ensure the best levels of service delivery in terms of fire and rescue provision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS