

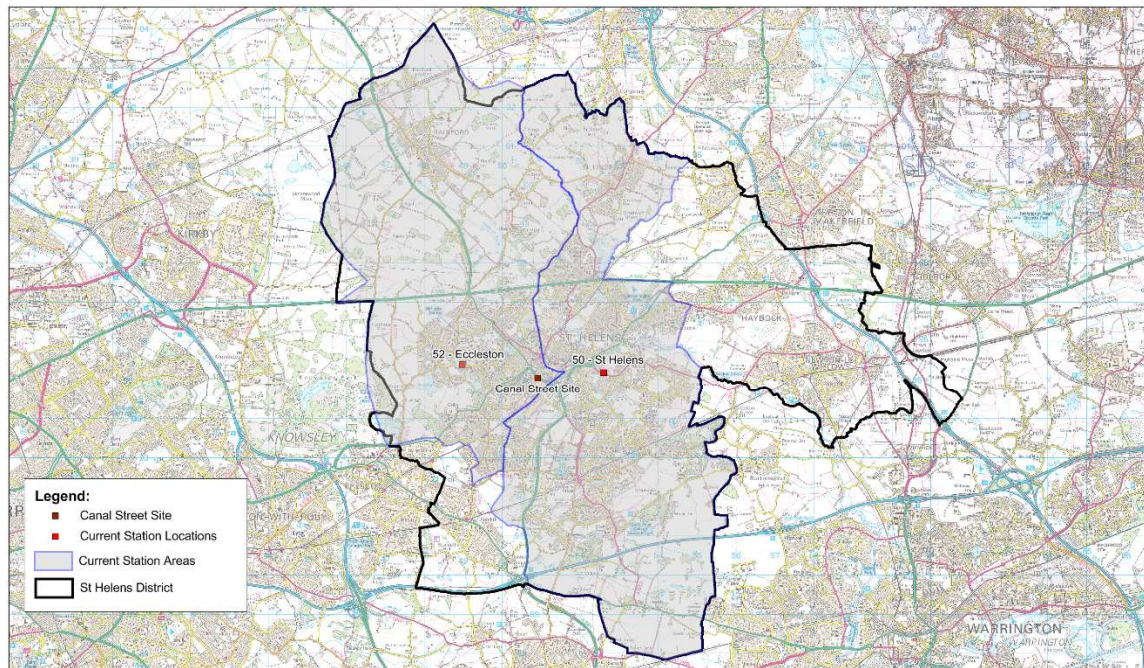


## 1. Introduction

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015; Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service began a twelve week consultation with residents and other stakeholders of St Helens, regarding the potential merger of the St Helens and Eccleston station areas at a site on Canal Street, St Helens.

The purpose of this report is to provide analysis of the feedback received concerning the proposed merger. A copy of the questions used in the consultation questionnaire are found within Appendix A of this report.

Map 1: Location of the proposed Canal Street site in relation to the existing St Helens and Eccleston Station areas



Author: J Fielding  
Date: 27/10/2015  
Produced using MapInfo  
Strategy & Performance

Map Reference:

Map of St Helens and Eccleston Station Areas  
with proposed Canal Street Site

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In total there were 64<sup>1</sup> responses to the survey.

## 2. Methodology

For the purpose of producing the feedback survey, an online questionnaire was created using SurveyMonkey - which also collected responses from members of the public.

Though the Survey is now closed it was originally published at the following URL: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sthelensmerger>

Feedback data was downloaded from SurveyMonkey and analysed using Microsoft Excel 2013.

The report only uses **valid** responses to each question - this is why counts can differ between questions.

<sup>1</sup> Though there were 64 responses not all questions have valid responses. The highest response to a single question is 62, meaning that 2 individuals failed to respond to that particular question.

MapInfo Professional 11.0 was used to map location based data. Comments published within this document are based on a selection received, the only adjustments to commentaries are corrections to misspelled words, otherwise comments are verbatim.

### 3. Findings

#### Q1) Having read the newsletter, do you agree that it is reasonable for the Fire and Rescue Authority to make the necessary savings by:

**Table 1: A) Closing Eccleston and St Helens fire stations; building a new station at Canal Street**

Response	Total	%
Strongly Agree	34	54.8%
Tend to Agree	17	27.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0	0.0%
Tend to Disagree	2	3.2%
Strongly Disagree	9	14.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62</b>	

Table 1 identifies that the majority of respondents - agree to some extent, with the proposed merger at the Canal Street site. When analysed in greater detail; 54.8% (34) of respondents Strongly Agree with the merger, with 27.4% (17) who Tend to Agree – a combination of 82.2% of respondents agreeing with the proposal of the merger.

**Table 2: B) Closing Eccleston fire station outright, as the alternative to merger at Canal Street**

Response	Total	%
Strongly Agree	3	5.1%
Tend to Agree	4	6.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	6.8%
Tend to Disagree	17	28.8%
Strongly Disagree	31	52.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>59</b>	

Table 2 identifies that the majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal of closing Eccleston as an alternative to the proposed merger at Canal Street. When analysed in greater detail; 52.5% (31) of respondents Strongly Disagreed with the proposal along with 28.8% (17) who Tend to Disagree – a combination of 81.3% of respondents disagreed with the proposal of closing Eccleston as an alternative to a merged Fire Station.

**Table 3: C) For both A and B above, one of the two 24/7 (wholetime) fire appliances would still provide an immediate response to incidents, but we propose that the second appliance would be crewed by on-call wholetime firefighters to provide a response within 30 minutes in exceptional circumstances only (e.g. periods of high demand).**

Response	Total	%
Strongly Agree	15	26.8%
Tend to Agree	22	39.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0	0.0%
Tend to Disagree	5	8.9%
Strongly Disagree	14	25.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>56</b>	

Concerning whether the second appliance should become retained, regardless of whether a new fire station is built at Canal Street or not, the majority of respondents 66.1% (37) agreed with the proposal, and a combined 33.9% (19) disagreed with the proposal.

**Table 4: Q2) Do you support including community facilities at the proposed station?**

Response	Total	%
Strongly Agree	38	61.3%
Tend to Agree	13	21.0%
Neither agree nor Disagree	4	6.5%
Tend to Disagree	3	4.8%
Strongly Disagree	4	6.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62</b>	

Table 4 identifies that the majority of respondents were in favour of the proposed merged station having community facilities. When analysed further 61.3% (38) of respondents Strongly Agree with the proposal, with a further 21.0% (13) of respondents Tend to Agree with the proposal. In combination this equates to 82.3% of respondents being in favour.

**Table 5: Q3) Do you support the possibility of sharing the proposed station with other blue light services?**

Response	Total	%
Strongly Agree	43	70.5%
Tend to Agree	13	21.3%
Tend to Disagree	2	3.3%
Strongly Disagree	2	3.3%
Neither agree nor Disagree	1	1.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>61</b>	

Table 5 identifies that 70.5% (43) of respondents strongly agree with the concept of sharing the proposed station with other blue light services. Overall in combination, 91.8% (56) agree to some extent with the concept of sharing the proposed fire station site with other blue light services.

**Q4) If a station was to be built at the site on Canal Street, please let us have your view on what you would like the station to look like, including any particular design features or facilities you would like included:**

The following selected comments detail responses where respondents have specified specific features<sup>2</sup>. Comments where respondents have expressed (or words amounting to) no preference have not been included.

Space for at least one other fire appliance, on top of those in Option A. Allowing for re-expansion if funds become available in the future
Ability to engage members of the community in fire safety/ prevention, promote digital engagement.
Modernist architecture and social facilities such as gyms and community activities
The building should be designed and built to last, to avoid further refurbishment / rebuild in the short term. The building should be designed to achieve the lowest possible operating costs in order to minimise impact on budgets.
The design should be functional and not waste money on stupid design features. The use of glass is appropriate given the heritage of the town. Good design doesn't cost any more than bad design. Eco features should be incorporated.
Modern building fit for purpose with energy saving / enviro-friendly features but sympathetic to the nearby residential areas. This would require full improvements to the road too and traffic lights for exit of engines onto the roadway.
Glass-fronted, including at upper level, as it would be on old Pilkingtons site.
Good and long lasting building. Suitable for everybody - male or female etc. No money wasting i.e. Gym

There were 9 comments (not detailed above) where respondents suggested the station should be similar to the Newton Le Willows design. Another trend is related to the proposed location of Canal Street, which was originally a Pilkington's site. Several respondents commented that the use of glass would be an appropriate design principle.

**Q5) Please provide any further comments in support of your responses:**

The following section provides comments<sup>3</sup> made by respondents, comments have been grouped into the following themes: Understanding the Reasons for the Merger, Community Related Comments, Response Comments and Other Comments.

**Understanding the Reasons for the Merger**

I have listened carefully to the information given at consultation meetings, and reluctantly agree that the merger of the two fire stations is the best option. I only hope that this is going to be the last closure of fire stations in our area.
Best of a bad situation. Ideally the intervention communication continues. Prevention is very important
A difficult decision made under difficult circumstances
Community inclusion - Blue Light Services - sharing costs
I appreciate the difficulties facing MF&RS in this period of Austerity. I accept the proposed measures as an optimum solution to a dire financial situation
Option A looks best to me

<sup>2</sup> There were a total of 36 responses to this question, varying in content and relevance

<sup>3</sup> There were a total of 26 responses to this question, all of which are detailed here



## Community Related Comments

Community facilities - please consult on how these may look and be used

The possibility of using facilities at Canal St site would be beneficial

Please don't forget about the local residents on the Shires or next door in Reflection House.

I would certainly be interested in any community facilities at the new station, whether it be group meetings or indeed the use of a gym that isn't full of young lycra clad Barbie dolls

Providing smoke alarms to everyone, not only 65 plus. Taking school groups to the new site, show them what smoke / fire can do

I felt the presentation was biased towards creating a new facility - the benefits of this are clear, however I feel we as St Helens residents are between a rock and a hard place. I would've liked more proposals to select from.

## Response Related Comments

My concern is that egress from canal street is very congested at peak times. Indeed how will the appliances get quickly onto the roundabout at the end of the Linkway from the burton head road/canal street direction? This road is normally congested back to the mini roundabout to the retail park and the entrance to the main roundabout is via traffic island which creates a choke point

My worry with this proposal is that you have miscalculated the likely response times of reaching parts of the borough and as a result the overall quality of service you provide will reduce.

There is insufficient data given in the consultation document to be able to give informed opinion. In particular, the focus on arithmetic average response times does not tell us anything about real world responses which will be distributed over a range of times that a lot of the time may be very rapid, but on a few occasions extremely slow putting the public at greater risk of losing their life. We need to know the current range of response times over a year and a predicted range of response times. I would suggest that it requires a particular skill set not usual to a fireman to make such a statistical prediction. We also need more information on the number of occasions when second appliances are called out to the same incident and to other incidents at the same time. Again we need the range of response times as well as average and we need predictions of the effects of closure or LLAR or retained cover.

I live in Eccleston, no matter how you say it, the response times to an emergency would be greatly increased if the Eccleston Fire station was closed.

Whilst I do not agree to the closure of any fire station, if it is to happen, then there should be two full time appliances available.

Clear cut view on access problems. Discussions with relevant other services

The response time will be much better to cover both areas

There should always be two appliances available in the town centre not on a recall basis. Community education work should be continued. Sharing a space with perhaps the ambulance service and perhaps a public services arm of the college could be interesting

I've read the document several times and just can't fathom how the merger and closing Eccleston fire station don't give the same outcome for Eccleston. Under both proposals the station at Eccleston is going.

Canal Street is one of the most congested areas of the town during the day and probably late into the evening. Why anyone would suggest building a fire station there is beyond me. If you want to combine fire and ambulance services rebuild at Parr Stocks which is in a proven location

The proximity / response time of the Canal Street centre is an important factor in my views

I would hope the fire engine leaving the station would not have any siren blaring, at least until it reaches the Chalon Way traffic lights. I live on The Shires, and am concerned about noise pollution, especially at night.

## Other Comments

Too much money spent on PFI and repayments

IT IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO CLOSE ANY OF THE STATIONS BOTH ARE NEEDED AND WE PAY FOR THEM ANYWAY WITH OUR INCREASING COUNCIL TAX BILLS GIVE US WHAT WE WANT DONT CLOSE ANY OF U DO CLOSE ST HELENS NOT ECCLESTON

**Q6) Having read the newsletter, do you have any other suggestions on how the Authority can make the required savings?**

The following selected *comments*<sup>4</sup> relate to respondents who have suggested ideas on where the Authority could make financial savings / recover costs. Only comments relating to financial savings or cost recovery have been listed.

Close Newton and 2 wholetime pumps at Parr Stock Road Fire Station
Continued reduction in back office costs/ review of approach to none "active" fire fighters and their allocation of different roles for the future.
Look at other revenue growth by taking on additional work that compliments the skills of your fire fighters.
Consider renting / leasing the land where the land where the current / old stations sit -> would provide an income to MFRS. Reduce spend / don't prioritise "community facilities". Concentrate on your core competency of preventing and fighting fires.
Make young people more an advertising priority in schools. Free fire alarms, therefore less emergencies, less money spent. Make half fire fighters "day time" only half full time.
Ambulances using the site
Centralise all admin support services (ie finance, HR, purchasing, training) Outsource non-core activities
Reduce the amount of publicity and marketing. Remove cars and car allowances for senior officers. Flatten the command structure. Thumb your nose at the Chancellor.

**4. Further Analysis**

The following section provides an overview monitoring information submitted by respondents, this includes: Age, Gender, Ethnicity and Location.

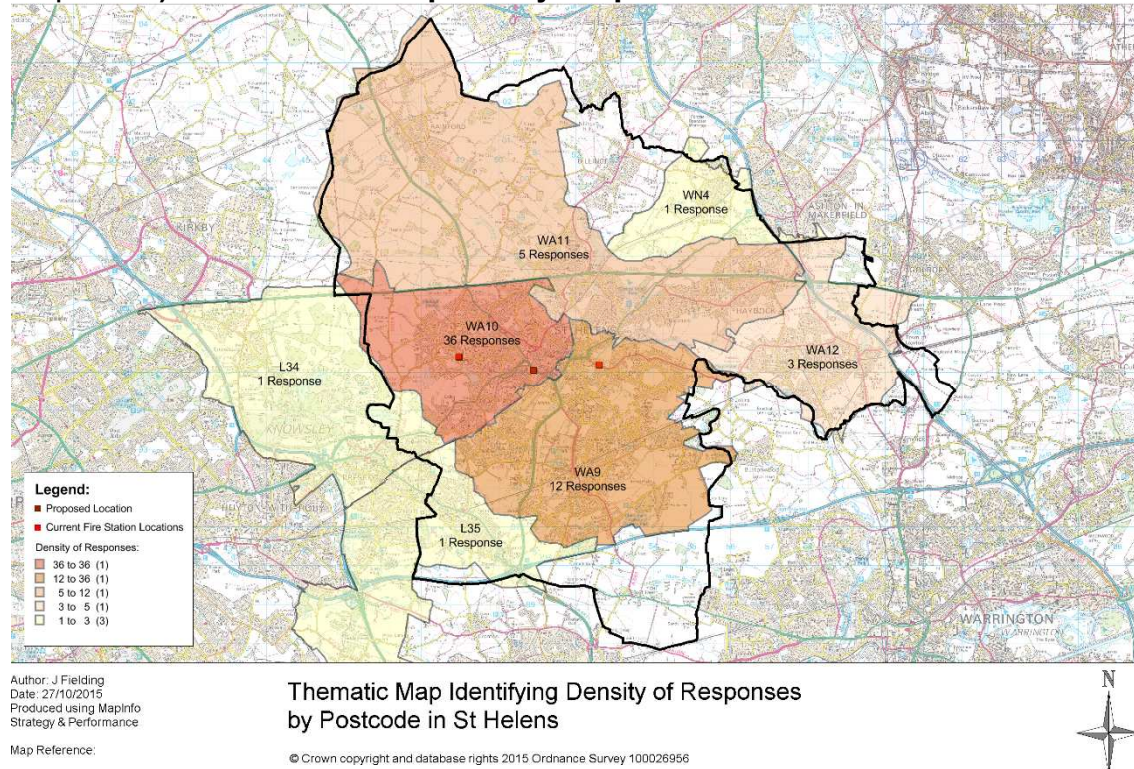
**Table 6: D1) Are you a member of: Please tick the appropriate box**

Response	Total	%
Partner Organisation	7	10.94%
Public	56	87.50%
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Staff	1	1.56%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>64</b>	

Question D1 asks respondents whether they are members of the Public, Partner Organisations or internal members of staff. The table clearly identifies that the vast majority (87.5% or 56 respondents) were members of the public.

<sup>4</sup> There were a total of 21 responses to this question, varying in content and relevance

**Map 2: D2) What is the first part of your post code:**



Map 2 provides an overview of the density of respondents by postcode. The map clearly identifies that of the valid responses to the questionnaire the WA10 postcode had the greatest volume of response with 36. This was then followed by the WA9 postcode with 12 responses. The map clearly shows that the majority of individuals to have responded to the consultation questionnaire were from the local areas being affected by the proposed merger.



Chart 1: Comparison of Age and Gender (D3 and D4)

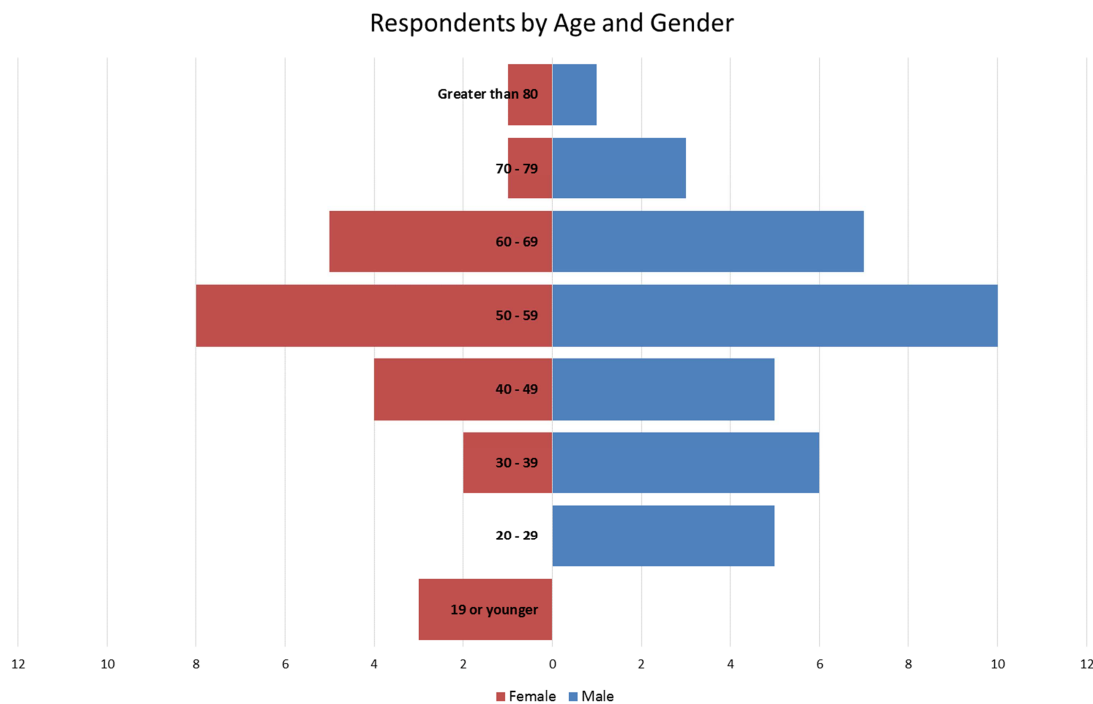


Chart 1 provides a population pyramid graphically representing the ages and genders of respondents. The age group with the greatest count of responses is the 50-59 group with 18 in total; this is then followed by the 60-69 group with 12 responses. The age groups to submit the fewest questionnaires are at the extremes of the age spectrum with the 19 or younger group having 3 respondents and the Greater than 80 group with 2 respondents. The overall count of female respondents was 24, and the overall count of males being 37, in both genders the 50-59 age group were most likely to respond to the survey.

Table 6: D5) Do you consider yourself to have disability?

Age	Yes	No	Total	% Disabled
19 or younger		3	3	0.0%
20 - 29		5	5	0.0%
30 - 39		8	8	0.0%
40 - 49	1	6	7	14.3%
50 - 59	6	12	18	33.3%
60 - 69	3	9	12	25.0%
70 - 79		4	4	0.0%
Greater than 80		2	2	0.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>16.9%</b>

Table 6 provides a breakdown of respondents by age and whether they considered themselves to have a disability. The majority of respondents, 49 or 83.1% did not consider themselves to be disabled with 16.9% considering themselves to have a disability.

When benchmarked against Census 2011 figures, 22.5% of the St Helens population have long term health problem or disability (where day-to-day activities are limited a lot 11.9% or a little 10.6%). In combination the 16.9%

of respondents to have reported themselves to have a disability is reasonably close to that of St Helens as a whole.

**Table 7: D6) How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

Response	Total	%
White: English	53	91.4%
White: Scottish	2	3.4%
Prefer Not to Say	2	3.4%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean	1	1.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>58</b>	

Table 7 identifies that the majority of respondents 53 or 91.4% were reported as *White: English*. The next largest recorded ethnicities were the *Prefer not to say* and *White: Scottish* groups; with 2 responses each or 3.4% of respondents. A single respondent was *Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Background: White & Black Caribbean*.

When benchmarked against ethnicity data taken from the 2011 Census, 96.6% of St Helen's population was recorded as *White*; therefore the % of valid responses to the survey, are in line with the demographic of St Helens as a whole.

## 5. Corporate Communications

**Table 8: C1) How did you find out about this consultation?**

Response	Total	%
Phone	24	33.3%
Consultation Document from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service/Authority	14	19.4%
Newspaper	13	18.1%
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service website <a href="http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk">www.merseyfire.gov.uk</a>	7	9.7%
Word of Mouth	5	6.9%
Facebook - Other Account	4	5.6%
@MerseyFire - Twitter	3	4.2%
Social Media	1	1.4%
Online news website - Echo	1	1.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>72</b>	

Table 8 identifies that respondents were primarily made aware of the consultation and associated events via direct telephone calls (as conducted by Opinion Research Services) accounting for 24 responses or 33.3%. This was followed by the Consultation Document; accounting for 14 responses or 19.4% then by Newspaper which accounted for 13 responses or 18.1%.

More people were made aware of the consultation events via the Internet and Social Media, than the Radio or Television - which no respondents selected. Concerning Social Media; 7 respondents were made aware of the consultation and associated events via <sup>5</sup>Facebook and 3 individuals via the @MerseyFire Twitter account.

<sup>5</sup> The data does suggest that no respondents found out about the consultation via the official MF&RS Facebook page

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix A: Electronic version of the consultation questionnaire

#### Proposed St Helens and Eccleston Fire Station Merger Consultation Questionnaire

On 3rd August Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority began a 12-week public consultation on proposals regarding changes to fire stations in St Helens.

A consultation document explains why the Authority is having to make changes to fire stations to deal with budget cuts, and outlines the options of either closing St Helens (Parr Stocks Road) and Eccleston fire stations and building a new fire station on Canal Street, St Helens; or closing Eccleston fire station outright. A link to the consultation document is here:

[http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/opsResponse/pdf/St\\_Helens\\_Consultation\\_Document.pdf](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspx/pages/opsResponse/pdf/St_Helens_Consultation_Document.pdf)

We are holding public meetings and other events during the 12-week consultation in order to fully understand the views of the public and other interested parties. Information on when and where the meetings will be held is included in the consultation document.

Please read the consultation document and complete the questionnaire below. The Fire and Rescue Authority will consider all the comments it receives before it makes any final decisions.

This questionnaire should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views.

Q1) Having read the newsletter, do you agree that it is reasonable for the Fire and Rescue Authority to make the necessary savings by:

	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>A)</b> Closing Eccleston and St Helens fire stations; building a new station at Canal Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B)</b> Closing Eccleston fire station outright, as the alternative to merger at Canal Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C)</b> For both A and B above, one of the two 24/7 (wholtime) fire appliances would still provide an immediate response to incidents, but we propose that the second appliance would be crewed by on-call wholtime firefighters to provide a response within 30 minutes in exceptional circumstances only (eg periods of high demand).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Q2)</b> Do you support including community facilities at the proposed station?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Q3)</b> Do you support the possibility of sharing the proposed station with other blue light services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4) If a station was to be built at the site on Canal Street, please let us have your view on what you would like the station to look like, including any particular design features or facilities you would like included:

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Q5) Please provide any further comments in support of your responses:

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Q6: Having read the newsletter, do you have any other suggestions on how the Authority can make the required savings?

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### Monitoring Information

Please note that information collected within this section is for monitoring purposes no personal identifiable information will be collated.

D1) Are you a member of:

Please tick the appropriate box

- Public  
 Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Staff  
 Partner Organisation

D2) what is the first part of your post code: (for example WA9) \_\_\_\_\_

D3) Your Gender: Please tick the appropriate box

- Male  
 Female

D4) Your Age: - Please tick the appropriate box

- 19 or younger  
 20 29  
 30 39  
 40 49  
 50 59  
 60 69  
 70 79  
 Greater than 80

D5) Do you consider yourself to have disability? - Please tick the appropriate box

- Yes  
 No

D6) How would you describe your ethnic origin? - Please tick the appropriate box

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> English	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background:</b> Other Mixed / multiple background
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian or Asian British:</b> Indian
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian or Asian British:</b> Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian or Asian British:</b> Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian or Asian British:</b> Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White:</b> Gypsy or Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian or Asian British:</b> Other Asian Background



<input type="checkbox"/> <b>White: Other White Background</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Black or Black British: Caribbean</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White &amp; Black Caribbean</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Black or Black British: African</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White &amp; Black African</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Black or Black British: Other Black Background</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background: White &amp; Asian</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

Other ethnic group (please state): \_\_\_\_\_

C1) How did you find out about this consultation?

(Please select all that apply)

- Consultation Document from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service/Authority
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service website [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)
- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV
- Word of Mouth
- Social Media
- Phone
- Online news website

If "Online news website" please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

C2) If you responded "Social Media" in the previous question, please indicate if this social media was:

- @MerseyFire Twitter
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Facebook page
- Twitter – Other Account
- Facebook – Other Account
- Other

If "Other", please specify: \_\_\_\_\_