

# INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

2012 - 2015 Executive Summary



2004-2005  
Services for Older People  
2006-2007  
Early Intervention (Children at Risk)  
2008-2009  
Reducing Health Inequalities



"An Excellent Authority"

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# FOREWORD

**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is pleased to present the Executive Summary of our Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2012 to 2015.**

We are currently delivering changes to our Service, which are necessary in response to Government grant cuts across the whole of the public sector.

**Our Service will seek to minimise the impact of the largest grant cuts we have ever experienced, in order to ensure the safety and effectiveness of our firefighters, so they can help create safer stronger communities.**

This plan sets out our priorities for the next three years, in what is for the whole of the Fire and Rescue Service a very uncertain time. This is because we are not yet aware of the extent of Government cuts for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

It has been stated by the Government that the Fire and Rescue Services financial challenge nationally will be back loaded into 2013 to 2015. Across 2011/12 and 2012/13 the Service has to make savings of £9 million. This figure may be higher again in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

During the consultation period Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens and Chair of the Fire Authority; Tony Newman, have met with other Chief Executives and Council Leaders to discuss the potential budget outcomes and the likely impact on the service delivered to the public.

We have a robust financial plan to deliver the cuts we know about and despite the bleak predictions for the future we are confident that we will be able to continue to deliver an outstanding Service which will contribute to making Merseyside safer and stronger.

We intend to deal positively with the challenges we are likely to face and still maintain the best Fire and Rescue Service in the country.

If you would like to read our full Integrated Risk Management Plan you can access here:

[\[http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspix/pages/IRMP/pdf/IRMP\\_2012-15\\_Published\\_Edition.pdf\]](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/aspix/pages/IRMP/pdf/IRMP_2012-15_Published_Edition.pdf)

# INTRODUCTION

**The Service has witnessed many changes over the last year. Most recently there has been a change of management team following the retirement of the former Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.**

The new management team is committed to ensuring a focus on an emergency response capability which puts highly trained Firefighters at the scene of an emergency quickly with the right skills, competencies and equipment to resolve any emergency incident safely and effectively. This focus is reflected throughout our plans and it is critical in these times of diminishing resources for public services to ensure that we are as efficient and effective as possible.

We will still continue to focus on stopping incidents occurring in the first place. We will achieve this by delivering our internationally renowned community safety programmes and home fire safety interventions where they are most needed and where they produce tangible results in reducing fires and preventing fire deaths and injuries.

Our aspirations are clearly stated by Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens;

"I see no conflict in striving to have the best trained and best equipped staff delivering an outstanding emergency response, world class prevention operations and the most efficient support services achievable.



Chief Fire Officer Dan Stephens

The balance has to be right across the whole organisation."

In order to achieve these goals an emphasis

will be placed on more frequent, high quality realistic training and exercising for all staff.

We have created an action plan to accompany this IRMP which we believe will help achieve our change in emphasis in a way which is best for our staff and creates the least impact on the services we deliver to the communities of Merseyside.

The actions included within this plan also include a full review of the duty systems which are available to operational staff, a review of how we staff specialist and support appliances and a review of how we provide command support for our officers at more serious emergencies.

Efficiencies realised from within these three areas will contribute directly to the savings we need to achieve and will increase the effectiveness of our current response provision.

We are seeking to develop a more integrated approach to working with other blue light responders which will include forging closer relationships through the sharing of accommodation and facilities.

It is also hoped that all of the changes will continue to improve productive relationships with our staff and their representative bodies and a shared vision which recognises the challenges and budgetary realities which face us now and await us in the future.

We are mindful of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that consideration of equality issues forms part of our routine, day-to-day decision making and operational delivery. Within this plan we have included our statutory equality objectives under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) regulations 2011 within this IRMP.

With commitment from all, we can work in co-operation to address these challenges and continue to provide a service which delivers outstanding levels of emergency response and value for money to the people of Merseyside and one of which you can be truly proud.

# OUR MISSION AND AIMS

## Our Mission; To Achieve;

Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

### Our Aims

#### Excellent Operational Preparedness

We will provide our firefighters with the training, information, procedures and equipment to ensure they can safely and effectively resolve all emergency incidents.

#### Excellent Operational Response

We will maintain an excellent emergency response to meet risk across Merseyside with safety and effectiveness at its core.

#### Excellent Prevention and Protection

We will work with our partners and our community to protect the most vulnerable through targeted local risk reduction interventions and the robust application of our legal powers.

#### Excellent People

We will develop and value all our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all.



# FINANCIAL CHALLENGE

As we continue to develop our plans for the future of our Fire and Rescue Service, we must be conscious of the issue of “affordability” when making these plans.

The Authority has, for a number of years, been committed to bringing expenditure and Council Tax levels in line with the average of the Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and has been very effective in achieving this objective.

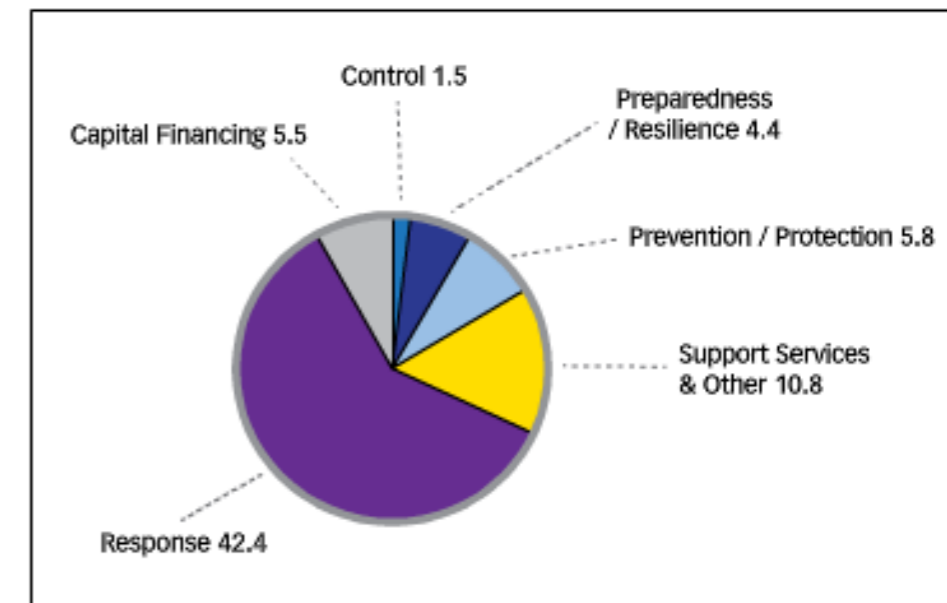
We are well versed in doing more with less.

Our outstanding performance has been delivered against a backdrop of cuts over the last decade – we have seen the largest reductions in Firefighters and have seen the lowest Government grant rises of any Fire and Rescue Service in the United Kingdom.

The Service’s expenditure is predominantly on employee related costs at around 76% of total expenditure. Therefore the Service must inevitably face the fact that it has to reduce its employee numbers in order to meet these future financial challenges.

The Authority relies heavily on the Government Formula Grant to support its spending. In 2011/12 this grant equated to 61% of revenue funding.

Fig 1 – Breakdown of Authority Costs for 2010/11. (Figures are £’ms)



The Government’s plans to reduce national debt through lower public sector expenditure include an average 25% reduction in Formula Grant for Fire and Rescue Services over 2011 – 2015.

Our dependence on this grant means Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority will experience a greater impact than most other Fire and Rescue Authorities in the United Kingdom.

# OUR VALUE FOR MONEY PRINCIPLES

The Fire Authority has approved five Value for Money Principles that it considers when setting its annual budget and financial plan, which are as follows;

**Principle 1** – We will allocate resources in line with priorities

**Principle 2** – We will seek to control Council Tax

**Principle 3** – We will acknowledge budget realities

**Principle 4** – The Authority seeks to avoid compulsory redundancy in delivering Value for Money

**Principle 5** – The Authority seeks to maintain or improve service levels

However, we still remain relatively high cost when compared to other Fire & Rescue Services, although this in part reflects the risks facing our communities.

## Government Grant Cuts

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service faced a £9m budget deficit over the period 2011/12 – 2012/13, mainly due to a 13.5% cut in Government Grant.

The Grant cut was over double the national average for English Fire and Rescue Services.

The grant for Fire and Rescue Services has not yet been announced at a local level for 2013/14 and 2014/15 but national figures indicate that only one third of the cuts which are likely for the Fire and Rescue Services in England have actually been applied to date. This means that two thirds of the cuts are still to come:

Based upon our best current estimates this means that the Fire and Rescue Authority might need to find further savings of £8.5m (best case scenario)

If Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority do as badly in 2013/15 as it has in 2011/13 compared to the national average, then the cuts will be very much higher again.

## Phase 1 Solution

The Fire Authority has adopted a two phased approach to the financial challenge facing the Service.

For the first phase (2011/12 – 2012/13) the Authority has approved a saving plan which would balance the budget, making savings of £9.2m by:

- Making an assumption that a **pay freeze will be implemented for its entire staff for three years** (including 2010/11). Since about 76% of expenditure is staff related this would save £3.00m.
- The savings are focused on **back office and management costs with 20% reductions** in head count in that area saving £2.45m. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority is aiming to achieve the savings by voluntary means but it is quite possible that

compulsory redundancies for non-uniformed staff may be required.

- **A reduction of 95 (10%) firefighter posts** with limited impact on front line services saving £3.35m by;

- Expanding the Dynamic Reserve of fire appliances.

- Using flexible staffing arrangements for a number of appliances

- Varying the response to automatic fire alarms and small fires on the basis of risk.

- As risks continue to be reduced it has been identified that alternative duty systems might be explored at Whiston Community Fire and Rescue Station to deliver savings.

- This includes a reduction of seven senior manager posts.

The reduction in firefighter numbers will be achieved by natural retirement rates but will take three years to achieve in full because of the predicted low retirement rates over this period.

- A review of proposed capital expenditure and funding saving £0.40m revenue debt servicing costs.

- Maximising our opportunities to generate income, through providing commercial training, conference facilities and other services. Even if we achieve the most optimistic targets for income this will only contribute a very small proportion of the savings we need to make.

- Because of the scale of the financial challenge likely in future the Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed to stick to the plan and increase Council Tax in 2012/13 by 4% to minimise the impact on the services to Merseyside in the future. The impact of the budget on Council Tax will be a **Band D Council Tax of £67.36, an increase of 5p per week to a total of £1.30 per week** towards the fire and rescue service. Most people in Merseyside will pay **Band A Council Tax of £44.91 or 86p per week towards their fire and rescue service.**

## Phase 2 Solutions under Consideration

In the second phase, the Authority will adopt a lobbying strategy for 2013/14 and 2014/15 in conjunction with other Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services, with a view to minimising the level of grant cuts. The Service notes that the Government intends a

“Resource Review” which will fundamentally examine how local authorities are funded.

Depending upon the success of that lobbying the Authority would face a stark choice between substantial service reductions or large-scale local taxation increases.

The Authority is concerned that phase two of the cuts might be so severe that public safety may be compromised and that a thorough review of the impact on operational response will be required. In order that an informed decision can be made on taxation and the Service we deliver a range of savings options are being developed during 2012/13. Including;

- Reviewing Fire Cover.
- Review of Response Standards.
- Review of Support Services.

As set out in this IRMP.

The Authority will in conjunction with the community, choose its future savings strategy regarding the balance between taxation and cuts for Phase 2.

Our budget for 2011/12 is available on line at;

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/pages/finance/finance.aspx](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk/asp/pages/finance/finance.aspx)

# THE WAY FORWARD

This IRMP is set against the background of our financial plans and many of the proposals within it form an integral part of our Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/17 and the Service Budget for 2012/13.

The Authority recognises that to maintain its financial planning targets for Council Tax increases of no more than 4%, against the current financial situation for Public Services, might mean further significant savings would have to be achieved. To deliver cost reductions it would have to reduce the number of its staff. At the same time the Authority is committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies whenever possible.

We are committed to delivering value to you for the high investment you make and in order to do that we will continue building upon our pedigree of improving service while reducing costs. It is clear that we will have to continue this approach in the future to maintain the delivery of our service with fewer resources.



# IRMP MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY 2012 - 2017

Our Medium Term Strategy will cover a 5-year period and we will review our performance against this strategy on an annual basis.

The aim of our strategy is to ensure that our yearly Action Plans are focussed upon the achievement of our Mission;

## Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters

**The IRMP Medium Term Strategy for the development of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service is;**

**Objective 1:**

To reduce accidental dwelling fires and the deaths and injuries which result from these fires in Merseyside.

**Action:** To analyse our performance on an annual basis using the Local Performance Indicators (LPis) which relate to fire deaths, injuries and accidental dwelling fires. We will introduce measures as necessary to ensure the reduction in all figures.

**Target:** We will reduce accidental fires in homes and the deaths and injuries they cause on Merseyside by 5% by 2017.

**Objective 2:**

To achieve an appropriate speed and weight of attack in emergency response to fires and road traffic collisions.

**Action:** To analyse our performance against our emergency response standards and introduce standards and measures as necessary to improve performance.

**Target:** To achieve a 90% attainment level against our response standards for fires and road traffic collisions.

**Objective 3:**

To reduce fires caused by antisocial behaviour in those areas of Merseyside identified as most at risk.

**Action:** To analyse risk to ensure we target our

intervention activity to reduce antisocial behaviour in those areas where risk is highest across Merseyside.

**Target:** To reduce antisocial behaviour fires by 5% by 2017.

**Objective 4:**

To reduce the impact of fire on commercial enterprise and the wider community

**Action:** We aim to use all available resources to ensure we minimise the risk to commercial property from accidental and deliberate fires and to help affected businesses recover to normality as soon as possible.

**Target:** To reduce fires in commercial premises by 5% by 2017.

**Objective 5:**

To reinforce our role in fire prevention by improving fire safety within the public and commercial buildings of Merseyside

**Action:** We will work with all businesses and stakeholders to educate and inform the business community about their responsibilities for fire safety in the workplace and to protect the public to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

We will lobby and assist all parties to improve fire safety design in buildings.

**Target:** We will improve regulatory compliance rates by 5% by 2017.

**Objective 6:**

To ensure that the operational workforce operate safely and effectively in the resolution of all emergency incidents.

**Action:** We will continue a programme for assessment of competence which reflects the evolving risks facing the Fire and Rescue Service in Merseyside and nationally and assess all staff within the operational workforce.

**Target:** We will assess the operational workforce across all areas of generic risk annually by 2013 and beyond.

**Objective 7:**

To ensure that we can respond safely and effectively to all emergency incidents locally, regionally and nationally.

**Action:** We will continue a programme to test operational plans and procedures using internal and multi-agency exercises.

**Target:** We will test the effectiveness of all operational plans and procedures annually by 2014 and beyond.

# EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

We are required by law to publish at least one equality objective. However, for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority equality and diversity isn't simply an add on, it is an important part of how we deliver our services and how we address inequality within our communities. As such our equality objectives are embedded within our IRMP and are delivered through our mainstream engagement. This approach to equality is one of many reasons why MFRS was recognised as Excellent when assessed against the Equalities Framework in 2010/11.

In line with our planning processes we have set five equality objectives which will be delivered and monitored through the life of the plan.



# 2012/13 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

## Equality Objective 1

In the past ten years Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has reduced accidental fires in the home by 37% and we will continue to build on this work through the use of our customer insight modelling and our station planning process to target individuals at risk and reduce accidental fires in the home and the deaths and injuries they cause on Merseyside by a further 5% by 2017.

## Equality Objective 2

We will reduce risk for people who live in rented properties across Merseyside by continuing to build productive relationships with Registered Social Landlords to cut accidental kitchen fires in social housing by 5% by 2017.

## Equality Objective 3

We will continue to engage with young people in vulnerable areas through our award winning youth engagement programmes with the aim of reducing deliberate antisocial behaviour fire setting by 5% by 2017.

## Equality Objective 4

We will work with at risk groups and local partners to contribute to the reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions across Merseyside to work towards achieving the local target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 37.5% by 2020.

## Equality Objective 5

Our aim is to create a strong cohesive organisation which is positive about rising to the future challenges we face. To achieve this our aim is to increase the representation of all minority groups within the communities of Merseyside in the Fire and Rescue Service by ensuring all future firefighter recruit courses have a minimum make up of 20% female and 8% black minority ethnic employees by 2017.

This Action Plan details how we intend to implement our IRMP for 2012/15. These actions will be taken in conjunction with our established budgets and to ensure risk is minimised and managed as effectively as possible given the constraints of our financial predicament.

## Operational Preparedness

### National Resilience to Terrorism and Non Terrorist Major Incidents

We will develop our existing capabilities and procedures in line with best practice to better prepare for this eventuality and to strengthen our contribution to local and national resilience in the face of such incidents.

### Assurance of Operational Preparedness and Performance

We will develop a new approach to assurance which reinforces our commitment to excellence and the way in which we deliver our Service to the people of Merseyside.

### Mobilising and Communications Centre

We will review our provision of emergency mobilising and communications to provide the most efficient and effective service possible.

This is to include a full examination of all the available options with local and regional partners.

## Operational Response

### Community Fire and Rescue Station Location Review

We will review current Community Fire and Rescue Station distribution to identify opportunity for combination at locations which represent the modern profile of risk and which enable fast, efficient and effective response to all the communities of Merseyside.

### Duty System Review

We will review all existing operational duty systems in conjunction with the station location review, in order to ensure the most effective operational response capability is maintained given the scale of the impending funding challenge.

## Review Staffing and Location of Specialist Appliances

We will review the duty systems used to staff our specialist appliances and teams to ensure the most effective operational response capability is maintained given the scale of the impending budget challenge. We will also review existing locations of our specialist appliances to ensure they are still the most appropriate sites to respond to risk.

## Risk Based Review of Response Standards

We will review the existing standards which are now seven years old, to ensure they reflect the current risk assessment for fire and road traffic collisions. We will consider the introduction of standards in new risk critical areas where we deem it appropriate to the safety of our community.



## Prevention and Protection

### Person Specific Risk; Targeting, Assessment and Reduction

We will develop existing activity to include the person specific issues which increase risk and vulnerability. This will include our ability to identify high risk individuals, visit these individuals, make a risk assessment and intervene to ensure risk is reduced to the lowest practicable level.

### Winter Survival

As a result of the harsh winter of 2010 we experienced on Merseyside, two people died in fires in their homes caused by electric heaters.

We will develop existing partnerships to identify the most vulnerable members of our community in winter and make interventions in cooperation with the third sector (volunteers) to mitigate the risks caused by the cold.

### Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – Nationwide Property Portfolios

We will develop relationships with businesses based in Merseyside who have large property portfolios, which require auditing under the current Fire Safety Order.

This will increase consistency across all premises for the companies concerned, as well as reducing the costs of preparation and disruption to business caused by the process.

### Major Incident Fire and Health & Safety Investigation

We will explore the means to establish an agreement on how to conduct major incident fire investigations and examination of health and safety issues on a regional basis in line with recommended procedures to prevent negative outcomes and promote mutual learning across the Fire and Rescue Service from experience.



## Our People

### Embedding our Values

We will develop all of the procedures and support structures to embed our values, ensure we offer the right development opportunities to all our staff and identify and nurture our future leaders.

### Maintain a workforce which reflects the requirements of the Service

We will build a clear profile of what the workforce will look like in the next decade by determining skill profile, appropriate structures, and requirements in terms of core role, specialism size and function.

### Urban Search and Rescue and Water Rescue Development

We will develop a response procedure to ensure national resilience and international support at incidents. This will give our staff greater opportunities to further develop the skills and equipment they already have contributing to greater experience and more effective resolution of this type of incidents.

### Assuring the Continued Safety of Our People

Although we already work hard at ensuring the health and safety of all our staff in their workplace, we will continue to drive accidents and injuries down and identify any trends and respond to these using any measures practicable.





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