



## Questions and Answers

### Why change fire cover on Merseyside?

Government's White Paper: 'Our Fire & Rescue Service' has presented us with the opportunity to review the service we give to the people of Merseyside.

The White Paper on the future of the Fire & Rescue Service called for a proactive strategy in preventing fires and other risks. It demands a Fire & Rescue Service which acts in support of Government's wider agenda of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and crime reduction.

This vision comes as no surprise to us, or the many people in Merseyside who have benefited from our services. Government's vision for a modern Fire & Rescue Service is consistent with the ground-breaking policies adopted in Merseyside over the last few years.

We want to build on our achievements and create new, improved standards of service and safety for everyone.

### What does the plan mean to the future of individual stations?

Every part of our community will benefit from a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week immediate response

from all our stations across the whole of Merseyside. This removes the threat of closure which was hanging over some of our stations who have a low number of call outs (Heswall, Formby and West Kirby)

### What is the life expectancy of this plan?

Five years in total, although we will review it on an annual basis in light of further information, data and evidence we will collect during this time.

### Are any firefighters going to lose their jobs?

No. – There will be no compulsory redundancies. There has never been a compulsory redundancy of a firefighter in the history of our Fire Authority.

However, the flexibility that comes with new working practices mean that we can achieve these improved services with less firefighters. These firefighters will be better skilled, better trained and better paid.

### Is this an exercise to make cuts?

No. This plan is required to be an objective risk assessment based upon the life, injury, property, commercial, environmental and heritage present in all areas and at all times of the day. The final plan could result in savings, but it could equally result in a re-distribution of resources, or even require financial investment.

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### Will I still get the same standard of response from Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service ?

Yes you will in areas that had previously been classed in the national standards as of a higher risk. In areas which were classed as lower risk (91 % of homes in Merseyside were included in these categories), you will get a better standard of response than the old national standards.

### Are you ever going to close a fire station?

We have no plans to close any of our fire stations, apart from the ageing City Centre Fire Station that is being replaced by a brand new community fire station at St. Anne Street.

### Is this going to lead to a Regional Fire & Rescue Service?

It is too early to say.

Government's White Paper called for a more integrated, regional, approach between neighbouring fire & rescue services. Merseyside, together with Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire are collaborating in areas where we can assist each other. They include: ensuring resilience to emergencies such as terrorist attack; regional based procurement; training strategies and the establishment of regional control rooms.

### What happens now?

Our plans will now be open to examination by the general public, community organisations, business groups, local authorities, other agencies, other emergency

services, workforce representatives, the Fire Service Inspectorate and other organisations affected or interested. We will present our plans to the five local authorities covering the Merseyside area and information will be available through the media and our own publications.

### Who is ultimately accountable for the plan?

The Fire Authority, but the Chief Fire officer advises them on their decisions.

### How can I give you my views?

Feedback can be given by emailing :

[consult@merseysfire.gov.uk](mailto:consult@merseysfire.gov.uk)

or by going to our website:

[www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)

where the entire strategy is available from Oct 24.

You can also write to:

The Chief Fire Officer,  
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters,  
Bridle Road,  
Bootle,  
Merseyside.  
L30 4YD.



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making communities  
*safer*



integrated risk  
management plan

*a summary*

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In April 2003 the government instructed all Fire Authorities to develop an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) by the end of October 2003. It is the most fundamental change to the Fire Service in more than 50 years.

An integrated risk management approach will enable us to save more lives, reduce injuries and protect property and the environment. It is an assessment of all risks to life and injury to the community, resulting in a long-term plan to make the Fire and Rescue Service more responsive to locally identified needs. It will mean a safer community. It takes into account commercial, economic, environmental and heritage concerns. Although it will be a Fire & Rescue Service plan, it will deliver a cross-agency strategy for community safety.

The work will be carried out in consultation with all other agencies, the community and neighbouring Fire Authorities.

**This is a summary of the proposed changes in our IRMP. The full document will be available on line at:**

**www.merseyfire.gov.uk from Oct 24.**

**PROPOSALS**

An end to the threat of reducing fire cover from a number of stations.

*Our new approach to safety sets the most ambitious fire reduction targets in the country and ensures that emergency response continues to receive the highest priority.*

Maintenance of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week immediate emergency response to all our communities across the whole of Merseyside.

*Every fire station in Merseyside will continue to have an*

*immediate response, all day and every day. This includes our stations with the lowest number of call-outs - Formby, Heswall and West Kirby.*

Expansion of our world leading approach to improving fire safety in the home through:

- Working with the elderly, our most vulnerable risk group
- Working with young people
- Providing active fire safety measures in the home, including alarms, sprinklers, deep fat fryers, safe smokers kits.

*Reducing fire deaths and injuries in the home will remain our top priority. More than a quarter of a million smoke alarms have been fitted free in Merseyside homes by our firefighters.*

*Nearly 200,000 homes in the region have been given free Home Fire Safety Checks by our firefighters, Fire deaths and injuries have been cut by more than 40%. The cost of fire to the local economy has fallen by 23 per cent from £52m in 1999 to £40m in 2002. We aim to carry out 60,000 Home Fire Safety Checks each year and increase the percentage of smoke alarms that operate in accidental dwelling fires –with a target of 60% in 2004/5.*

Major increase in our rescue role to include a new concept of the rescue pump as our primary response fire engine and the creation of a dedicated, highly skilled Special Rescue Team.

*Every one of our fire stations will have a dedicated rescue pump (fire engine) carrying advanced rescue and firefighting equipment. The need for urban search and rescue capability, underlined by recent natural and terrorist disasters, requires the creation of a well trained and equipped, specialist rescue squad based in Merseyside but available across the North West region*

Major expansion of the Fire Safety Advocate Scheme.

*We will create more Fire Safety Advocates from within local communities to deliver a more flexible customer-focused home safety strategy to those most at risk. These personnel will support and compliment the excellent work being done by firefighters on all fire stations across Merseyside.*

Extension of career opportunities in fire safety engineering through increased use of technical officers.

*We are committed to developing our existing Fire Safety staff and attracting new staff from a wider background than has previously been possible to carry out inspections and legislative work.*

Development of RAPID (Risk Assessed Programme for Incident Deployment) system for future management of risk planning.

*This new comprehensive analysis system will ensure that all future planning is based on knowledge not assumption, evidence not instinct.*

We are committed to managing our service improvements within a framework of affordability.

*Our strategy is to provide resources to maximise their impact in reducing the risks from fire for the people and businesses of Merseyside. In spite of facing strong financial pressures we are committed to the continuation of our policy of reducing costs, relative to other Metropolitan Fire Authorities.*

Creation of a new dedicated and permanent Incident Command Team.

*The new team will comprise of high-performing Incident Managers.*

Introduction of pilot co-responder scheme.

*At location(s) to be determined and in partnership with Mersey Regional Ambulance Service, we will co-respond with an ambulance to certain calls where someone is suspected of suffering a heart attack. Our fire crews will be equipped with defibrillators and trained to use them.*

Introduction of pilot Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV).

*Utilising the services of two existing four-wheel-drive vehicles, we will pilot a scheme to provide a response to rubbish and other secondary fires at peak times of the day. These are very low-risk fires but can be a nuisance. Our new approach will mean that our life saving vehicles are not wasted dealing with rubbish fires when they may be need for an emergency elsewhere.*

Introduction of pilot flexible staffing system on stations with Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) to ensure an exceptionally high response standard to the community.

*In support of maintaining immediate response to all communities - even those with a very low number of call outs - we will pilot moving support or secondary fire engines from their normal bases, at certain times of the day, to other stations.*

Change our aerial appliance strategy to introduce improved attendance standards and the new combined pump platform vehicle concept (CPP).

*In our year one action plan, we will introduce attendance standards for aerial appliances of 10 minutes in high risk areas, 15 minutes to commercial risks and 20 minutes elsewhere. Four strategically placed aerial appliances will meet these standards. Technological advances in fire appliance design will enable us to*

*replace two of the existing aerial appliances with a combined machine that can operate as an aerial appliance or fire engine.*

Southport will keep its third fire engine and aerial capability.

*The town's fire station will maintain its current fire response of three fire engines and aerial capability. We will buy a combined support pump/aerial appliance (CPP) to replace the present aerial appliance and propose that the third fire engine will be staffed on a flexible (on-call) basis by the community of Southport – including current firefighters who live there, and volunteer to give even further commitment to their community.*

Introduction of improved pay systems and opportunities for flexible and optional overtime working for personnel.

*There is a need for a core shift system which maintains 24-hour cover and there will remain plenty of opportunity for those existing firefighters who wish to do so, to remain on their present shift pattern. However, we will also want to introduce ways in which staff can work part time; focus on day time, or evening shifts but reduce their commitment to night time working; work their contractual hours in a more flexible way; vary work patterns so that they are not necessarily based at a single fire station or local office, but could move to different parts of Merseyside to address the particular risks faced by different communities.*



**Other elements include:**

Creation of new specialist career opportunities in dedicated rescue roles, incident command roles, fire safety advocate roles and technical officer roles

Pilot locality managers in support of improved local partnership working, and performance management also enables increased career opportunities in the Fire Service.

Development of statutory fire safety role to include business continuity

Creation of operational resource centres for better management of operational support needs

Mobilising policies for improved safety

New District Structure to improve district based partnership working

Extended working with the voluntary sector

Introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System for firefighters

Extended role of Incident Investigation to also include a contestable research fund developed in partnership with Merseyside universities

Implement improved rewards package for firefighters, including voluntary overtime opportunities

These changes which will improve the service to the community, will be done within a framework of affordability, with many efficiencies created by the introduction of more flexible work patterns across the service.

Our proposals should mean standards of service improve for everyone and standards of safety improve for all.