

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service  
Integrated Risk Management Plan  
2012/15**

**DRAFT Document**



## **Foreword**

We are pleased to present 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.

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.

## 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. 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.

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# **Our Mission, Aims and Core Values**

## **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**

To 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, health inequality intervention 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.

## **Our Core Values**

### **Make a positive difference to our community**

We will build upon our unique position of trust and respect within the community and the professionalism of our staff to tackle the real underlying factors which affect risk.

We will achieve this by seeking partnerships in areas where we believe we can contribute to making communities safer from fire and other emergencies.

### **Provide an excellent and affordable service**

We will manage our emergency response flexibly, with an emphasis on those most at risk.

We will do this by managing the number and type of appliances which are available to respond to emergencies at different locations throughout the day, night and at different times of the year to more accurately reflect the changing level and location of risk.

### **Everyone matters**

We aim to reduce risk in every home on Merseyside to a tolerable level, with no homes being assessed as high risk after we and our partners have offered support to the resident.

To achieve this we will be more sophisticated in the way we commit resources to reduce risk; we will continue to offer free Home Fire Safety Checks to residents in Merseyside as we have done for the past ten years, but our key focus will be to work with our partners to identify and provide assistance to those individuals within the community who are most at risk from fire and other emergencies.

### **Respect our environment**

We will fulfil our responsibilities for protecting the built and natural environment, with support and commitment at the highest level.

We will continue to identify and manage our activities, which have an impact on the environment, without compromising our operational response or our service delivery to the communities of Merseyside.

## **Our people are the best they can be**

We will ensure our workforce has the necessary knowledge, skills and values to make a difference.

We will support them in their role and encourage them to contribute their ideas to continually improve the Service to deliver our mission.

We will ensure our staff receive the training and information they need, in order to deliver our services to a high standard and that they are protected in their work through a comprehensive and robust approach to health & safety.

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## 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.

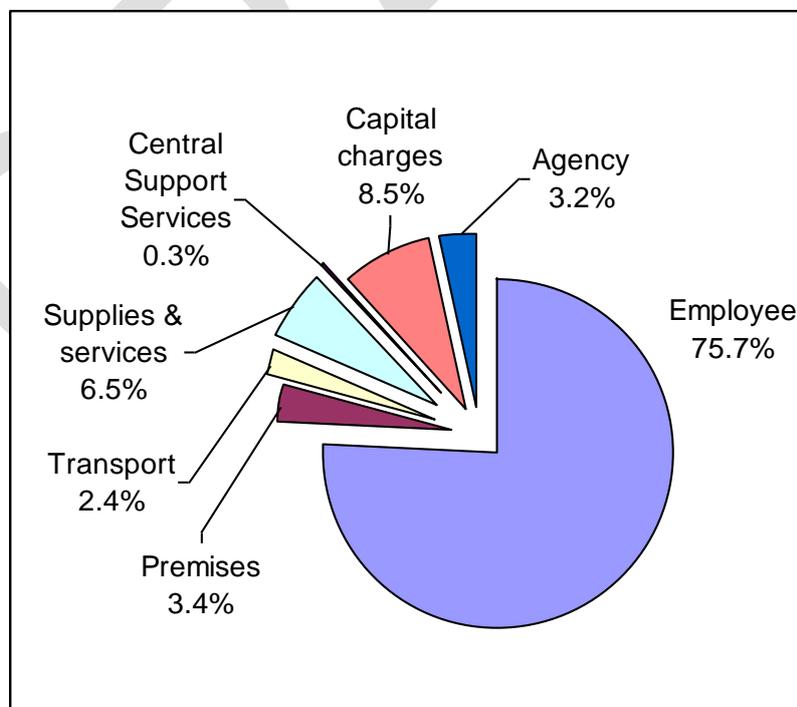
The Authority has, for a number of years, been committed to bringing expenditure and Council Tax levels in line with the average of the Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and has been very effective in achieving this objective.

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 (fig 1.). Therefore the Service must inevitably face the fact that it has to reduce its employee numbers in order to meet these future financial challenges.

**Fig 1** – Breakdown of Authority Costs for 2010/11.



The Authority relies heavily on the Government Formula Grant to support its spending. In 2011/12 this grant equated to 63% of revenue funding.

The Government's plans to reduce national debt through lower public sector expenditure include a 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 – Control Council Tax***

***Principle 3 – 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***

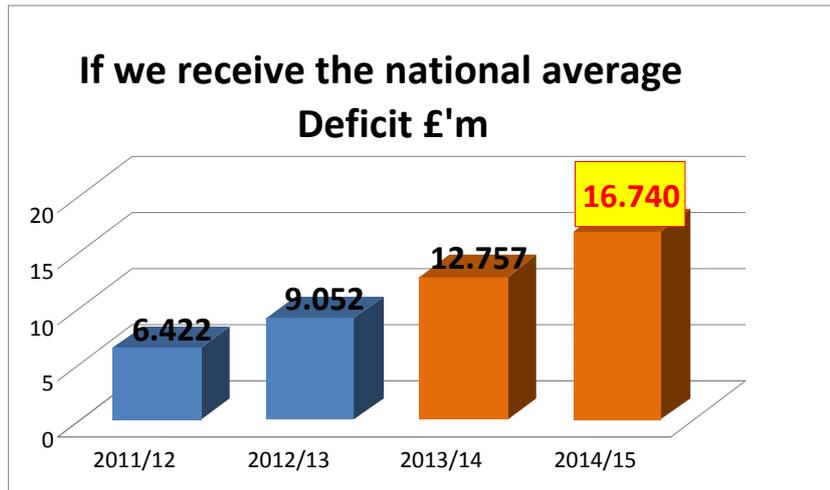
However, we still remain relatively high cost when compared to other Fire & Rescue Services, although this in part reflects the risks facing our communities.

### **Government Grant Cuts**

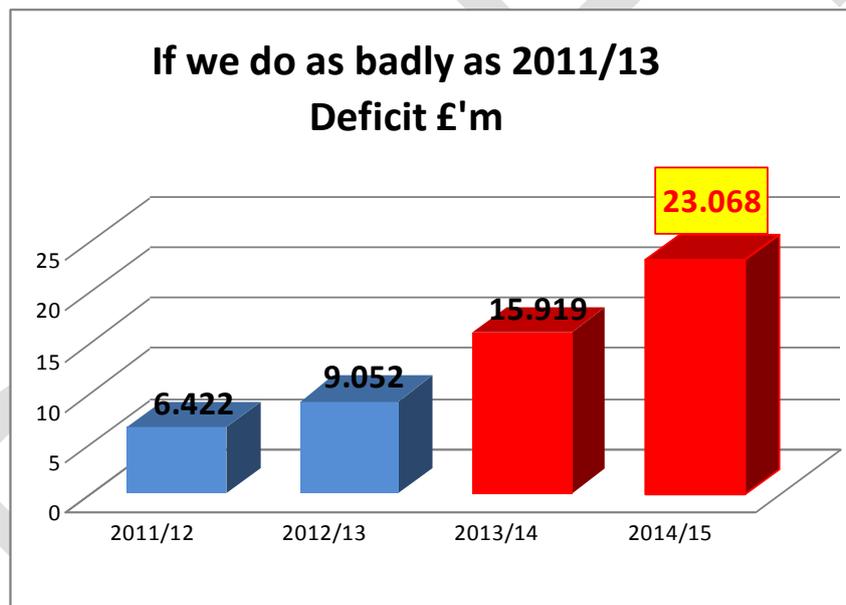
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service faced a £9m budget deficit over the period 2011/12 – 2012/13, mainly due to cuts in government grant. We have experienced over a 13% cut over these two years; this is over double the national average for English Fire and Rescue Services.

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 1/3<sup>rd</sup> 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:

- If Merseyside receives the forecast national average cut in 2013/15 the financial challenge will rise to £16.7m, creating an additional £7.7m of savings to find.



- If Merseyside does as badly in 2013/15 as it has in 2011/13 compared to the national average, then the cuts will amount to over £23m. This will mean an additional £14m of savings will need to be found.



### 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 92 (10%) firefighter posts** with limited impact on front line services saving £3.35m by;
  - 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.

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.
- Despite the severe cuts imposed by Government, the Authority recognised the financial pressures on local people and responded by freezing council tax for 2011/12. However, to avoid making the financial position any worse from 2012/13 the future financial plan assumes council tax increases will be 4%. This planning assumption is under review in light of central Government views which support a Council Tax freeze for 2012/13. Any reduction in our Council Tax income will increase the savings targets further.

## **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.

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 of increases of no more than 4%, against the current 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.

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.

Would you like to share your views with us? Then please contact the IRMP Officer at;

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

Or alternatively;

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters  
Bridle Road  
Bootle  
Merseyside  
L30 4YD

## **Our Service to our Communities**

Merseyside has a resident population of some 1.4million living in an area of 653 km<sup>2</sup>. Although we have pockets of affluence, for example in West Wirral and North Sefton, large areas of Merseyside have some the highest rates of social deprivation in the UK.

Wards in all five local authorities in Merseyside (Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley and St Helens) are within the top 20% of the most income-deprived in England. There is a direct correlation between deprivation and greater risk from fire and our various risk mapping techniques have enabled us to identify “hot spot” areas where greatest effort may be concentrated to reduce the risk. The 20% most deprived wards are over twice as likely to have a fire or fire related injury as the 20% that are least deprived.

National statistics show the risk of death from fire is 16 times higher among children in the lower socio-economic group compared to children in the highest. Arson rates are 30 times higher in poorer areas with a 15 times increased chance of death compared to affluent areas. It is a sad fact that an older person is far more likely to die in a fire than any other age group.

Merseyside has an increasingly aged population, particularly in Sefton (18% increase in 85 year olds) and Wirral (17% increase in 85 year olds). The numbers of pensioners living alone in Merseyside has also increased by more than the national average in the 10 years between the censuses. Furthermore, the number of pensioners with a long term limiting illness has increased by over 30% in both Knowsley and Liverpool, although the number of pensioners in rented property has decreased by over 30%. Older people are particularly vulnerable to fire with the vast majority of fire deaths occurring in the over 60s age group. Often this is accompanied by other factors that add to the vulnerability such as mobility and sensory difficulties, and a lack of ability to respond to danger. The elderly are statistically less likely to have a smoke alarm than many other groups in society. When additional factors such as living longer and often living alone longer and the effects of limiting illness are added, the risks to this age group increase.

Younger men (16 – 20) are more at risk from serious road traffic collisions, and young people generally are more likely to be involved in fires related to anti social behaviour.

Being from a particular racial or religious group can place people at increased risk from hate crime and this can include the use of fire as a weapon. People from the transgender community and lesbian and gay people can also be targeted in hate crime attacks.

## Merseyside Statistics

### Age

Children and people over pension age make up over 40% of the population of Merseyside *(ONS/Census mid-2010 estimate)*

Age	Merseyside	%
0-14	226,900	16.77%
15-29	293,800	21.71%
30-44	245,900	18.17%
45-64	354,100	26.16%
65+	232,700	17.19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,353,400</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Disability

People who are eligible for disability living allowance make up 10% of the population of Merseyside. *(Department for Work and Pensions, Feb 2011)*

	Merseyside
Number of population entitled to DLA	123,085
All Others	1,230,315
Percentage of population entitled to DLA	10%

### Gender

There are over 40,000 more women than men in Merseyside

*(ONS/Census mid-2010 estimate)*

Gender	Number	%
Male	654,700	48.37%
Female	698,700	51.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,353,400</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Minority Ethnic Groups

The last available statistics showed that in 2008 just over 95% of Merseyside was of white ethnicity. This had decreased from 97% in 2006, indicating that Merseyside is becoming more diverse (*ONS/Census mid-2006 estimate*)

Mid 2008 ethnic population estimates - ONS

Note: Total population numbers do not equal total from ONS

Ethnicity	Merseyside	%
White	1,284,300	95.11%
Mixed	17,000	1.26%
Black and Black British	12,100	0.90%
Asian and Asian British	21,100	1.56%
Chinese and Other	15,800	1.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350,300</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Gypsies and Travellers

Merseyside has an increasing gypsy and traveller community with settled sites in Sefton, St Helens and Liverpool. (Communities and Local Government - July 2010)

Authorised sites (with planning permission)		Unauthorised sites (without planning permission)		Total All Caravans
Socially Rented	Private Caravans	Land owned by Gypsies	Land not owned by Gypsies	
301	116	30	10	457

## Religion

Merseyside is not religiously diverse. 82.4% of the population of Merseyside is of Christian religions and 16.18% either have “no religion” or “religion not stated” . This leaves a total of just 1.34% of the population with other religious beliefs. (*ONS/Census 2001*)

	Merseyside	%	North-West	%
<b>Christian</b>	1,122,356	82.40	5,249,686	78.01
<b>Buddhist</b>	2,298	0.17	11,794	0.18
<b>Hindu</b>	2,508	0.18	27,211	0.40
<b>Jewish</b>	3,803	0.28	27,974	0.42
<b>Muslim</b>	8,344	0.61	204,261	3.04
<b>Sikh</b>	774	0.06	6,487	0.10
<b>Other</b>	1,584	0.12	10,625	0.16
<b>No Religion</b>	118,116	8.67	705,045	10.48
<b>Religion Not Stated</b>	102,243	7.51	486,681	7.23

## Household Structure

The composition of households shows that above 25% of all lone parent households in the North-West are within the Merseyside area. There are also high numbers of students and pensioners residing in Merseyside in comparison to the rest of the North-West region. (ONS / Census 2001)

		Mersey/ side	North- West	
<b>One person</b>	<b>Pensioner</b>	91,479	423,623	
	<b>Other</b>	94,470	446,611	
<b>One family and no others</b>	<b>All pensioner</b>	46,260	238,711	
	<b>Married couple households</b>	<b>No children</b>	57,270	345,657
		<b>With 1 child</b>	32,487	178,350
		<b>With 2 or more children</b>	56,509	302,627
		<b>All children / non-dependent</b>	39,625	182,482
	<b>Cohabiting couple family households</b>	<b>No children</b>	18,129	115,123
		<b>With 1 child</b>	8,089	47,752
		<b>With 2 or more children</b>	8,773	49,118
		<b>All children / non-dependent</b>	1,740	9,519
	<b>Lone parent households</b>	<b>With 1 child</b>	28,223	112,331
		<b>With 2 or more children</b>	27,014	103,279
<b>All children / non-dependent</b>		25,204	97,737	
<b>Other Households</b>	<b>With 1 child</b>	7,465	30,542	
	<b>With 2 or more children</b>	7,096	32,186	
	<b>All student</b>	2,387	9,137	
	<b>All Pensioner</b>	2,926	11,378	
	<b>Other</b>	16,162	76,626	

## **Operational Preparedness**

Competent staff help Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to achieve our mission

### **Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters**

We will seek to prevent incidents from happening in the first place, but safe and effective resolution of incidents when they do occur will be achieved through the implementation of the following:

#### **Pre-planning**

We will use national guidance and align this to our safe systems of work and knowledge of local risk to prepare to respond safely and effectively to every known premises and every emergency incident. We will maintain and make available to responding Firefighters Site Specific Risk Information.

#### **Training**

The training programme for Community Fire and Rescue Stations will comprise two levels. The first is the foundation level and will involve the safe, competent use of all of the equipment, which is carried on front line fire engines. This will be supplemented by underpinning knowledge against our Standard Operational Procedures. The second level will involve realistic 'live' training conditions and these will be conducted at our Training and Development Academy and other locations.

The Training and Development Academy provides state of the art facilities where our Firefighters can train for dealing with incidents in realistic, but controlled scenarios, so that they can work safely at real incidents.

We will also use other approved specialist venues for training to broaden the learning experience and to ensure that our staff train and are assessed daily against their required operational competencies.

In addition to the above practical training, we provide a comprehensive library of training subjects on our computer based training platforms. This facility provides our staff with the knowledge that underpins the skills acquired during practical training.

#### **Post incident**

We will learn from all relevant experience and apply the lessons we learn. We will achieve this through incident analysis and ensure that appropriate structures are in place to support our staff. In addition, we will provide a monthly command seminar, as an environment for all of our staff to learn from incidents using case studies.

## **Site Specific Risk Information**

In order to respond effectively and protect our Firefighters from specific hazards at particular locations, we have aligned our protocols and procedures with national guidance and best practice.

We have a computerised system on every fire engine designed to deliver information to our incident commanders to help ensure the safety of Firefighters and members of the public at emergency incidents.

We continue to improve this system and are working towards gathering and processing site and risk information for every premises on Merseyside which may pose additional risks in a fire situation to Firefighters and the public either from its construction or contents. This will result in us visiting an estimated 6,500 sites on Merseyside.

The provision of floor plans, current risk information and tactical considerations provides our operational staff with a powerful tool to assist them in tackling incidents at these locations in a safe and effective manner.

## **Risk Management**

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has sophisticated and comprehensive plans in place to deal in conjunction with other emergency services and agencies with any large scale event within Merseyside, the North West and also provides the necessary resilience to respond anywhere in the United Kingdom.

The risk assessment for these types of incidents occurs locally through the Local Resilience Forum. The Community Risk Register (Local risks), Regional Risk Register and National Risk Register contain a list of identified risks within each area for the current year. We work with other emergency responders through the Local Resilience Forum to establish these registers and make all necessary joint preparation for the full range of incidents that may affect Merseyside.

The Community Risk Register 2011 for Merseyside is available on our website;

[http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk.aspx/pages/reports/pdf/Merseyside\\_CRR\\_2011\\_PUBLISHED.pdf](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk.aspx/pages/reports/pdf/Merseyside_CRR_2011_PUBLISHED.pdf)

## **Operational Response**

We will always make this a high priority; we understand that this is most important to the people of Merseyside, knowing that should they require us in their time of need we will always respond appropriately with highly trained professional Firefighters using the best appliances and equipment available to safely and effectively resolve any emergency.

At present, our emergency response resources include; 42 fire engines, 5 Rescue boats, 4 aerial appliances, and numerous specialist response and support vehicles which are based at 27 fire and rescue stations across Merseyside.

### **Response to Fire in Property**

These standards are now over seven years old. Owing to the reduction in risk that has occurred on Merseyside and in light of the potential financial challenges ahead, we intend to review these standards during the life of this plan.

In the meantime, our response standards in relation to fire in property remain amongst the fastest in the Country and are;

- High Risk – First attack within 5 minutes with additional support within 8 to 10 minutes.
- Medium Risk – First attack within 6 minutes with additional support within 9 to 11 minutes.
- Low Risk – First attack within 7 minutes with additional support within 10 to 12 minutes.

Our aim is to achieve these standards on 90% of occasions.

The risk category is assigned, according to our risk map, to each location within Merseyside.

Getting to the incident quickly is important, but to support this achievement our Firefighters are highly trained, exercised and provided with the best equipment available.

By adopting new methods and equipment we can have a significant impact on the way we commit resources to incidents and deliver the safety of Firefighters and public alike.

### **Student Rescued**

Kieran Murphy was Student at Liverpool Hope University studying Disability & Education. Following a night out with friends, Kieran returned home to his halls of residence in the early hours of the morning and began to cook. Firefighters from Toxteth later pulled Kieran out of his blazing kitchen unconscious.

Kieran had to spend 11 days in intensive care followed by two further weeks in the Burns Unit at Whiston Hospital.

When speaking about the incident, Kieran said “The Firefighters saved my life without a doubt. At the end of the day, I am here and back to normal and I am very grateful for that. I owe my life to the fire service and the hospital staff.”

After making a recovery, Kieran honoured the firefighters who helped to save his life by running the Reading Half-Marathon in aid of the Firefighters Charity, to recognise the life saving work that firefighters do everyday.

### **Response to Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)**

People involved in road traffic collisions on Merseyside can be assured of a prompt and effective response. Our response standard in relation to road traffic collisions where persons are reportedly trapped is an attendance at the incident within 8 minutes of the first notification.

We aim to achieve this standard on 90% of occasions.

Our response is supplemented by the deployment of the Search and Rescue Team to all road traffic collisions. The Search and Rescue Team are trained in specialist skills to the highest national standards and significantly enhance our ability to safely free people who are trapped.

We are deeply concerned that although we attend relatively few road traffic collisions where people are trapped, a high level of deaths and injuries are sustained in these incidents, our aim is to do something about this.

We have launched a Road Safety Campaign to target the most at risk group; 16 to 20 year old males.

### **The Operational Performance Team**

The Operational Performance Team will work across the Service and will audit the operational performance of all operational teams to ensure the safety of Firefighters and to improve our effectiveness.

The purpose of the team is to assure the Fire and Rescue Authority that the Service is prepared to deal with operational incidents of all types and sizes,

that operational practices reflect the Service's policies and that operational firefighters and officers can discharge their duties in a safe and effective manner.

The Performance Team will audit all station based personnel against the centrally set criteria every month. Performance Team Officers will attend a morning briefing at headquarters to review incidents during the past 24 hours. Any emerging areas of improvement will be immediately adopted into the audit process.

Strengths and best practice will be shared throughout the Service positively whilst identified areas of improvement will be fed back to the responsible Watch Manager and their line manager with a clear outcome focused action plan

### **Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)**

The people of Merseyside benefit from a highly proficient Urban Search and Rescue capability.

We have a comprehensively trained team, which is equipped with the latest equipment provided by Government to respond to any major incidents which require this type of response, such as a collapsed building.

The Firefighters and search and rescue canines of the USAR team are available 24hrs a day and ready for deployment anywhere in Merseyside, or beyond to assist in any incidents which require this specialist expertise.

This capability is maintained to provide resilience on a national level for large scale incidents and accidents.

#### **EXERCISE ORION**

Exercise Orion was the largest exercise ever carried out by the UK fire service and tested how emergency services would cope if a catastrophic earthquake simultaneously hit several parts of the Country.

A realistic urban street scene at the Training & Development Academy and a major pile-up of more than 40 vehicles in the disused spur of the Birkenhead Tunnel, were recreated for the Merseyside element of the exercise, which involved up to 100 firefighters, 23 fire appliances, 5 helicopters and 7 Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) Teams from across the country. The exercise also involved the Police, Paramedics, North West Air Ambulance, the Army, the RAF and volunteer casualties.

The exercise gave Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service the chance to test their response to a major incident and the ability to maintain this commitment over a 48 hour period. It was an extremely realistic and valuable learning opportunity for all involved.

## **Water Rescue**

Those people who use Merseyside's waterways are safer as a result of our commitment to ensuring we have the highest levels of water rescue capability.

Merseyside has significant risks related to waterways, so to address these risks we have developed a response capability to swift and still water.

Our Marine Rescue Team, which is continually available on immediate response, is sited in the River Mersey Community Fire and Rescue Station on the Merseytravel pontoon at the Pier Head.

The Team are available to respond immediately to incidents on the River Mersey and dock system, from Fort Perch Rock at the mouth of the Mersey to the Runcorn Bridge. They provide an essential element of the response to potential emergencies at Liverpool John Lennon Airport as well as effectively dealing with other emergencies on the river.

To supplement this we have highly skilled tidal and fast flowing water response technicians within the Search and Rescue Team who are continually and immediately available to attend emergencies in moving water wherever it may be.

The Service water rescue response capability is structured to align with guidance issued by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Flood Response National Enhancement Project.

The Service has five type B rescue boat teams registered with Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs that are able to respond to national emergencies resulting from large scale flooding, such as in Cumbria in 2009 where we assisted in the rescue effort.

The Service has further enhanced its ability to quickly and safely respond to incidents on water, mud and unstable ground with a rescue hovercraft. The hovercraft will be immediately deployable to incidents anywhere in the County and will assist with the provision of a safe system of work when responding to these types of incident.

To ensure our Firefighters can work safely in and around still water, mud and unstable ground, all of our firefighters are trained as still water responders and the necessary equipment to respond to this type of incident safely is carried on every rescue appliance in Merseyside.

### **National Water Rescue Event**

After the summer floods of 2007, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service recognised the benefits of organising a national water rescue training event. The driver for hosting the event was to provide an opportunity for rescue teams that would only normally come together at a major incident to train together in a challenging environment.

The training was carried out in Llangollen and on Anglesey Menai Bridge, North Wales. It allowed fire crews from 6 different Fire and Rescue Services and an Ambulance Service the opportunity to learn from each other and share best practice in a realistic environment in order to work together more effectively during real emergencies.

### **Rescue from Height**

Every Firefighter is trained to work safely at height with ropes and every rescue appliance carries a well equipped rope access kit.

In addition, we can immediately deploy the Search and Rescue Team who are highly skilled with rope access and rescue equipment to perform more complex rescues across Merseyside at any time. These incidents are usually high risk and are protracted by their nature; to reflect this; the team is highly trained and rigorously exercised in the use and application of this technical equipment.

### **Crane Driver Rescued from Near Fatal Collapse**

Iain Gillham was driving a crane in the City Centre of Liverpool, when the crane collapsed, causing him to plummet 200ft. Iain was trapped up to his waist and fire crews devised a careful plan to extricate him from the rubble.

Iain sustained major injuries, and was given only a 15% chance of survival.

However, Iain defied the odds and is now on the road to recovery, even managing to attend the Commendation event at the Maritime Museum to meet some of the crews who rescued him, who were being presented with awards.

Iain said "It was wonderful to meet them. I wanted to personally say thank you. I know how much they did and the risks they took and I'm just so grateful to all of them."

## **Hazardous Materials and Environmental Protection**

We reduce risks from incidents which involve hazardous materials or threaten possible contamination of the environment through the development of a highly qualified and well equipped Hazardous Material Response Team. They are located in an area with a high concentration of chemical risks and are available 24/7 to respond to these types of incidents as well as providing fire cover as a support appliance.

The Service will further develop partnerships within the chemical and environmental protection industries to help sites return to normal business as soon as possible following incidents of this type.

### **Detection Identification & Monitoring (DIM)**

The DIM vehicle and equipment enables:

- Detection of a wide range of chemical or radiological hazardous substances.
- Identification of hazardous substances whether chemical, biological or radiological.
- Monitoring of the levels of contaminate present and to establish and maintain cordons.

The unit is supported by a team of highly qualified and trained DIM advisors who have responded to incidents both on Merseyside and in support of neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services in the North West.

### **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Response**

We maintain the capability to respond to incidents involving CBRN (E) threats both within Merseyside and across the whole Country.

The vehicles and equipment are supplied by the Government and our staff are trained and frequently exercised to respond to these incidents safely and effectively.

Our primary role is to ensure the safety of the public through the efficient decontamination of any one person or group of people exposed to these hazards.

### **Other Rescues**

The people of Merseyside are well served by a comprehensive approach to tackling a whole variety of emergencies.

To address the hazards posed by Merseyside's vehicle and railway tunnels we have specialist equipment and suitably trained Firefighters which are

strategically located to provide a fast, effective response to any incident which occurs within the tunnel systems.

We also have introduced a new fire engine with off road capability and the equipment to perform technical and high risk large animal rescues and other rescues of a technical nature as well as functioning as a front line firefighting appliance.

### **Mobilising and Communications Centre (MACC)**

We have always maintained a state of the art facility for answering 999 calls staffed by highly trained and experienced operators to ensure calls are dealt with immediately and our appliances are deployed quickly and efficiently.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority have always invested in this important element of our Service and have kept pace with technological developments to provide a modern and highly efficient mobilising system.

The Government had plans for a National network of Regional Control Centres, but has since terminated this project. The Fire and Rescue Authority has to decide what its provisions for the future will be.

In order to secure the best value we can for this function we are considering options for the future provision of this service with local emergency service partners.

### **Response to Terrorism and Non Terrorist Major Incidents**

We train regularly and are equipped to respond to this type of incident.

Working in these circumstances requires close co-operation with the other blue light services and to secure this we have agreements in place with both Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service.

These procedures were used at the recent civil disturbances in Liverpool and Birkenhead to secure the safety of all involved.

## **CIVIL UNREST**

During the incidents of civil unrest which occurred throughout the UK, including on Merseyside, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service responded to a number of property fires, car fires and secondary fires. Six fire appliances were damaged and two firefighters sustained injuries as a result of flying glass during the disturbances.

However, due to the pragmatic views of Officers and Firefighters, and the quality of Watch Managers in making risk assessed decisions over tackling incidents, the amount of damage suffered by the communities of Merseyside was mitigated to a substantial extent and scenes similar to those viewed in other major cities were not replicated on Merseyside.

Staff from across Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service also provided support and reassurance to the community in the aftermath of the disturbances in the form of clearing combustible materials from the streets and providing safety advice to residents and businesses.

## **High Volume Pump Capability**

As part of the National Resilience capability we maintain a High Volume Pumping Unit which is continually available on an immediate response. This asset has been provided to respond to catastrophic flooding incidents and is capable of supplying huge amounts of water to fight fires.

Our unit has been deployed in the past to severe flooding in Cumbria and locally in Huyton and to assist with fire fighting at Buncefield and locally in Birkenhead.

## **Our Service to our Communities**

### **Prevention and Protection**

#### **Prevention**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service recognise that Community Safety is about delivering comprehensive multi agency solutions to local issues that have been identified by local people.

As a result Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, through its innovative work, has placed the community of Merseyside at the centre of everything it does.

The Community Fire and Rescue Station has become a hub for local people, with children, families and community groups using our resources; the kitchens to cook healthy food safely, the gyms to encourage healthier life styles and the stations to engage young people in fire safety education and the development of life skills.

We recognise that to truly respond to the needs of our communities we need to understand them, their problems, concerns and challenges and we need to shape our services to respond to those needs effectively and ensure we take account of the risk facing our diverse communities.

We train our staff to understand the diverse backgrounds of the main ethnic, religious and social groups on Merseyside. Our staff are informed of the cultural needs of our different communities in order to provide the best and most supportive service possible.

#### **Assessing Need and Risk**

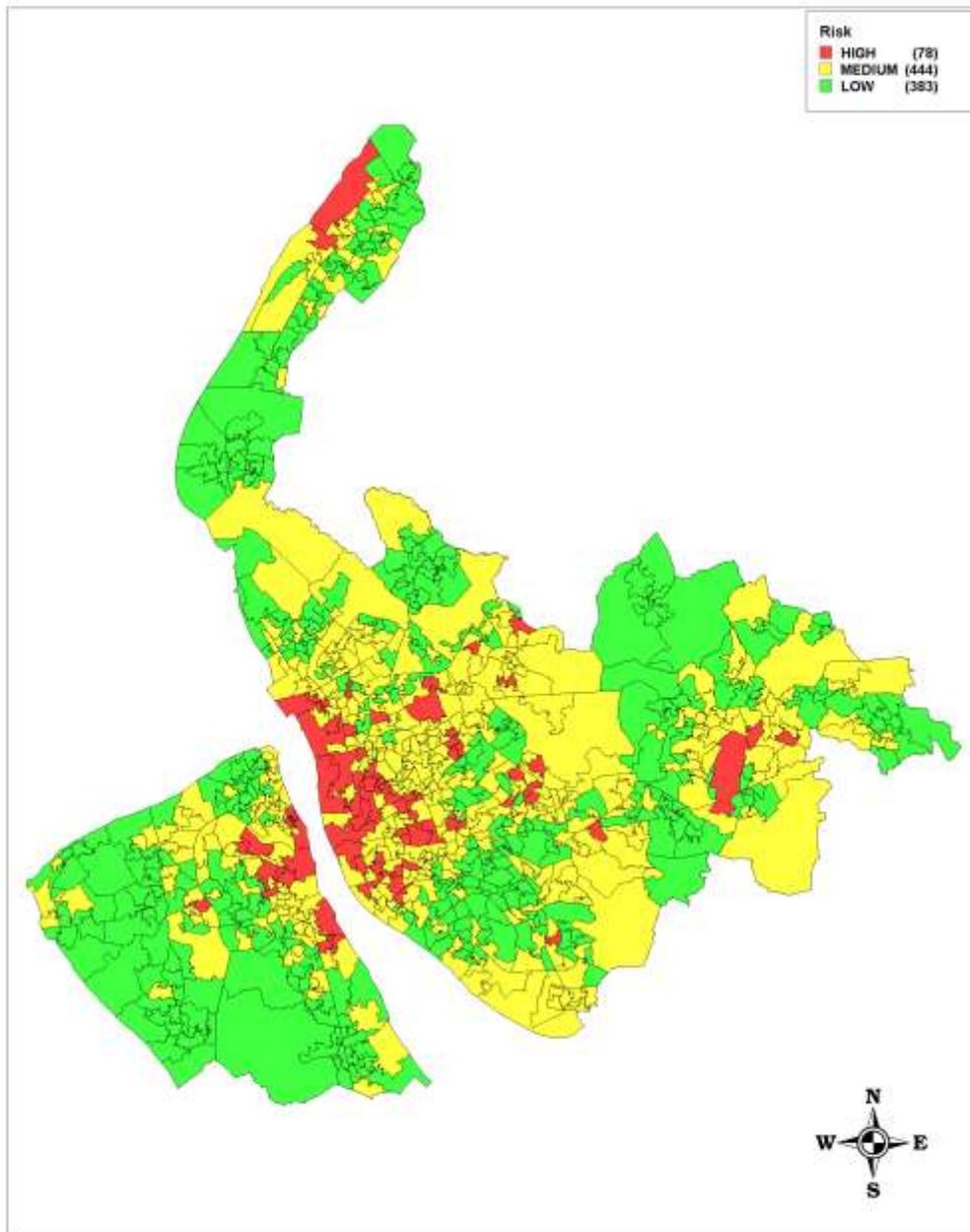
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is developing a model to identify individuals whose lifestyle puts them at increased risk of suffering a fire in their home; this will mean we can intervene in a precise way to reduce the numbers of accidental dwelling fires that occur across Merseyside.

##### **Equality Objective 1**

This pioneering use of multi-agency data will identify the most at risk and vulnerable members of our community, allowing us to target our resources in a more sophisticated manner to where they will have the greatest impact.

In the past ten years Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has reduced accidental fires in the home and we will continue to build on this work through the use of our business intelligence model to target individuals at risk.

## 2012 Risk Map



Author: Darren Poole Date: 15/03/2011  
Produced Using MapInfo Professional 10.0  
Knowledge and Information Management  
File Ref: KIM Systems Support\URMP Risk Methodology Data\Risk Map Data\_010400\_310311

Risk Map 2012

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This map identifies relative risk across Merseyside and we continue to use it to guide our prevention activity and our emergency response strategies.

## Home Safety

Given the very difficult financial situation, there is a greater need to work smarter with community safety partners to reduce risk. In recognition of this, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have launched a publicity campaign to raise awareness around the dangers that exist in kitchens and the potential for fire.

Over 60% of accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen.

This campaign has been supported by a number of Registered Social Landlords, who are key partners we identified through an analysis of the types of homes where fires have occurred.

### 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.

We have launched our risk based approach to improving safety in the home and expanded the resource available through volunteers who deliver safety advice and fit smoke detectors to protect life and property.

We also recognise the need to involve our communities in the solutions and we will continue to work with them to resolve those challenges. Our work with the voluntary sector, social enterprise and volunteers will remain our focus throughout the life of this plan.

## Improving Health, Reducing Risk

Working together, with partners and the community, we can address the needs and concerns of our most vulnerable people.

Developing the role the community plays in supporting the most vulnerable, whether it be to fire, social isolation or health related issues will be a priority of a number of our initiatives this year.

We were one of the first Fire and Rescue Authorities to act upon the fact that poor health reduces quality of life and as a result can increase an individual's risk from fire. We have been successful in winning our third Beacon Award for Reducing Health Inequalities because of our innovative approach in this area.

## Tackling Anti Social Behaviour and Youth Engagement

Anti social behaviour remains a major concern for our communities and impacts on resource availability for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Deliberate fire setting, attacks directed towards Firefighters and hoax calls all consume large amounts of our time and resources. Our work to address this unacceptable behaviour will continue to be innovative, robust and excellent.

The civil disturbances that affected South Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral not only demonstrated the robust operational capability of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service but leadership within community reassurance by providing a sustained presence of Fire and Rescue Service staff, together with members of the public, partners from Community Safety and Fire Support Network volunteers all involved in the community clean up in the affected areas.

### **Street Intervention Team Encounters Burglars**

In September 2011, just after 9pm the Team turned into Inner Forum and heard the sound of glass breaking, as the Team approached the house from where the noise had come, two males ran from the driveway.

The Team shouted at them to stop, but both individuals fled in the direction of Outer Forum.

The Police were called immediately and a full description of the individuals was given. The Police found that although the kitchen window had been smashed no entry to the house had been made.

The next evening the Team returned to the scene visiting the affected house and reassuring the residents and explaining their role within the community. The resident thanked the Team for their timely intervention in protecting his home.

We recognised a number of years ago, that through early intervention and engagement with young people we could make a difference, not only in relation to their negative impact on the community and our Firefighters but equally as a positive impact on the individuals themselves, by building self confidence, instilling respect for themselves and their communities and raising their aspirations. Funding has been secured through City Safe in Liverpool to continue to provide a street intervention team who provide direct engagement with young people on the streets of Merseyside. We have also secured funding on the Wirral to expand our Fire Cadets scheme for young people aged 14 to 18 who will work towards a national qualification for Firefighters in the Community.

### Equality Objective 3

We will continue with our award winning youth engagement programmes and we will continue to respond to the needs of young people and their families by developing new services to meet these needs.

We will continue to tackle anti social behaviour in our communities through our work with Merseyside Police and the community.

### **Preventing Arson**

The focus of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Threat Response Group and Anti Social Behaviour Task Force will remain on arson and deliberate fire setting. Arson has a disproportionately negative effect on our communities, not only by destroying infrastructure and businesses, but by weakening the local economy through potential unemployment. 43% of all property fires we attended in 2010/11 were generated as a result of deliberate actions by someone. This figure is unacceptable and an unnecessary waste of valuable resources, so we will continue to robustly challenge the perpetrators of these crimes. Through the work of our Fire Investigation Team we have been integral in the successful prosecution of arsonists responsible for the destruction of a number of business premises in Merseyside.

Our Firewatch Campaign aims to reduce deliberate small fires which are associated with anti social behaviour. We work in partnership with local authorities, the Police, The National Trust, Crimewatch and various registered social landlords. We are able to move resources quickly to trouble spots to resolve the issues which have led to reductions in the number of small deliberate fires within each of the districts of Merseyside over the spring and summer months of 2011.

Our work with local businesses to address issues of arson and develop fire safety understanding will continue and we will work with them to address the impact that false automatic fire alarm actuations has on our ability to react to real fires.

### **Fire Investigation**

Following a two year painstaking investigation by officers from MF&RS and Merseyside Police and a three week trial at Liverpool Crown Court an arsonist was jailed for five and a half years after being found guilty of arson and making fraudulent insurance claims of over £200,000 in relation to the blaze.

Firefighters were called to the carpet warehouse at around 9pm on August 19, 2009 after disposable BBQs were set alight on top of pallets outside of the building and on the window ledge.

The officers who led the investigation are part of The Flare Team which was set up two years ago to investigate commercial arson.

### **Serial Arsonist**

Following a major blaze in Liverpool City Centre, an investigation was conducted by officers from MF&RS and Merseyside Police.

The incident involved rubbish being set fire to in the rear doorway of an Indian Restaurant, which spread rapidly throughout the building. The incident resulted in an estimated £1.7million of damage and a number of residents were lucky to escape alive.

Following the investigation, an individual was arrested. They had two previous convictions for arson and were on license when they started the fire.

The individual pleaded guilty to arson being reckless as to whether life was endangered and was jailed for life at Liverpool Crown Court

## **Preventing Road Traffic Collisions**

Summer 2011 saw the launch of our Road Safety Strategy which includes the provision of education and training to young people across Merseyside. Outcomes have been agreed which contribute to the action plans for the road safety partnerships across each district as well as the reduction of Road Traffic Collisions that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service respond to.

Interventions are being delivered by Firefighters and community prevention officers in partnership with local road safety teams.

#### Equality Objective 4

We will reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions with local partners and we will help Merseyside work towards achieving the national target of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions by 33% by 2020

#### **ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY LAUNCH ON NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY DAY**

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011 was National Road Safety Day and also saw the launch of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's five year plan for road traffic collision reduction, with the aim of making the roads across Merseyside safer. A number of events were held across the five districts of Merseyside to help launch the strategy and raise awareness of road safety.

More than 400 people are killed or injured each year across Merseyside in road traffic collisions and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service rescue far more people from road traffic collisions than fires. Therefore, it is only right that the Service directs it's resources towards trying to reduce such incidents from occurring.

#### **Fire Fit**

Fire Fit is the over arching brand name used to describe the initiatives that that the Fire & Rescue Service is advancing to contribute to the healthy eating, fitness and well being agenda in local communities.

A huge range of activities are already being delivered across Merseyside by Firefighters under the 'Fire Fit' banner. These include the provision of boxing clubs, Ministry of Food eating programmes and 'Heartbeat' gym sessions in fire stations for those recovering from heart attacks.

The initiative to develop a dedicated Fire Fit Hub builds on this further. The Fire Fit Hub is a joint arrangement with Liverpool City Council for the provision of an integrated community facility focused on health, fitness and well being with an operational community fire and rescue station.

The construction of the Fire Fit Hub in Toxteth is progressing well, and the facility is on schedule to open in summer 2012.

The Authority is working closely with the local community to ensure that the range of services on offer meet their needs. The Fire Fit Hub will offer a range of sporting facilities and activities such as football, martial arts and aerobics as well as educational facilities and focused youth services.

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## Protecting Merseyside

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are committed to making Firefighters safer and more effective and making the communities of Merseyside safer.

The priority of the Community Protection Department is to contribute to the Service's aims to reduce the risk from fire in all premises across Merseyside. In particular the Department has a responsibility to manage the fire risk in all premises across Merseyside as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 through a risk based programme of audits.

### Fire Safety in Commercial Property

Commercial premises that we consider represent the greatest risk to our community will be audited and inspected more frequently, and by using our enforcement powers Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will ensure premises are compliant with the law contributing to your safety. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will promote a positive and proactive approach to compliance by educating and informing stakeholders to meet their responsibilities whilst responding proportionately to regulatory breaches. Normally we work with the 'responsible person' to assist them to meet their obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 but in cases of extreme non-compliance or where people are at risk we will use the powers we have available to prosecute these individuals.

An important aspect of our activity in this area is to ensure the safety of members of the public in premises used to socialise such as pubs, clubs, theatres and similar premises. Visiting the highest risk premises at times of peak usage at any time of the day or night, using all of the resources at our disposal allows us to ensure compliance with the law and secure public safety at all times.

#### Caught in the Act

An arsonist was jailed for five years after being caught on camera. The blaze was started in a 3 story property in Aigburth. After two previous fires, the housing authority had installed a covert camera in the hallway of the property, which caught the individual in the act.

The individual admitted a charge of arson which recklessly endangered life.

## **Licensing**

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority are also the petroleum and fireworks licensing authority on Merseyside. All sites that store fireworks or petroleum and dispense petroleum, whether mechanically or electronically, into the fuel tank for an internal combustion engine of a vehicle, boat or aircraft will require a licence. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will enforce the legislation applicable to these premises and follow a risk based inspection programme to support business and ensure community safety.

## **Partnership Development**

The Community Protection Department will develop relationships with other agencies and seek out new opportunities to initiate partnerships and memoranda of understanding, where appropriate, that support and educate the local community whilst aiming to reduce the risk of fire. This approach to partnerships will have a strong commitment to coordination and cooperation with other relevant enforcement authorities in order to maximise the efficiencies of our sectors, this prevents duplication and contradiction and ensures that loopholes which impact upon community safety are robustly closed.

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## **Our Service to our Communities**

### **Our People**

We are committed to the development and fostering of our values in all of our staff.

### **Organisational Development**

This is a key activity which under pins the delivery of the Service. It is focussed on our primary asset; our people.

All our staff contribute to our mission.

Our aim is to have the right people in the right positions across the organisation with the right skills and values to ensure every aspect of the Service is delivered in the most efficient and effective way possible.

This philosophy applies to every member of our staff, with opportunities for personal development being made available to all staff, along with the support they need to be the best they can be.

We operate a coaching and mentoring scheme from the Chief Fire Officer to the most junior staff, with assigned support offering guidance and advice to all.

#### **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 we aim to retain and if possible increase the numbers of women firefighters and black, minority, ethnic staff across the whole organisation.

### **Leadership Development**

As part of our organisational development, we recognise that our managers can make a huge contribution.

We have a Leadership faculty which supports both our existing and emerging managers to maximise their potential and to ensure that they can respond to the changing requirements of the service.

For the Fire and Rescue Service, leadership on the incident ground is of paramount importance, as our operational Officers are required to make life and death decisions. Consequently we make a large investment in both time

and money in their development to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and values to be able to safely and effectively carry out this challenging role.

The scope of our leadership development does not end there, as our courses run with both operational and non operational staff attending together to foster the combined learning and cohesion we realise is so important to achieving our mission of ***Safer Stronger Communities - Safe Effective Firefighters.***

## **Crew Based Training**

We have delivered operational training to our Firefighters this way for eight years and we have found that learning and training in the teams we work in, delivers synergy and safety on the incident ground when we resolve emergencies.

Also, as our firefighters attend the Training and Development Academy in their fire engines, they remain available to respond to emergencies should the need arise. In eight years we have disrupted training to recall fire engines to immediate emergency response on only 5 occasions.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service demonstrate a high level of commitment to developing its operational staff primarily through Crew Based Training and e-learning. Crew Based Training is delivered by Training and Development Academy instructors who are qualified to national and international standards and have the skills, knowledge and understanding of best practice from around the world.

E-learning training packages founded on our Standard Operating Procedures are developed internally, with the aim of embedding the knowledge of operational best practice within our Firefighters.

Our investment in instructors reflects our commitment to excellence and this had led to instructors developing practices and procedures which deliver both safety and efficiency on the incident ground and are recognised as best practice around the world.

The facilities at the Training and Development Academy are state of the art. Investment in these facilities is ongoing and reflects the ever changing expectations of our emergency response capabilities.

Through our investment in both people and facilities, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service delivers training with a focus on Firefighter safety and professional efficiency to deal with a wide range of incidents in realistic environments.

## Duty Systems

We have a wide range of duty systems in operation which have allowed us to provide a very flexible service and to offer numerous opportunities to our staff. However, because of the budget realities we now face, a review all of our duty systems is necessary to ensure that they are as efficient as possible and deliver our core services within the constraints of the budget.

We recognise there will probably be impacts on the service we provide and potentially on our staff therefore we will consider all of these in detail before we make any changes.

Our aspiration is to have operational staff who are trained appropriately and work flexibly. We will consider the needs and expectations of our staff and ensure that we provide the right resources required to deal with the differing levels of risk we experience across Merseyside at different times of the day and night.

### Equality Objective 6

In 2011 we had 14 bespoke flexible working arrangements that enabled staff to manage their domestic commitments. We aim to increase this number in accordance with demand by 2015.

## Property Portfolio

Our properties consist of 27 Community Fire and Rescue Stations, Mobilising and Communications Centre, Service HQ, Training and Development Academy, Engineering Centre of Excellence, 5 night cover houses and two vacant sites.

Our most recent additions are the River Mersey Fire and Rescue Station located on the Merseytravel pontoon at Pier Head and the ongoing development of the Fire Fit hub in Toxteth.

An issue we are addressing is the location and standard of our Community Fire and Rescue Stations; many of these still occupy sites which date back to the early 1900's, with our oldest site dating back to 1836.

Merseyside has seen a huge amount of change and development since those times. Industry has changed and moved, the people now live in different, safer homes in urban developments across Merseyside, away from our town centres. The legacy this has created is that many of our Community Fire and Rescue Stations are now no longer in the best position to respond to incidents in the communities of Merseyside.

We intend to conduct a full review of Community Fire and Rescue Stations locations to ensure, we can where possible occupy sites which reflect risk

across Merseyside, allow efficiency savings and allow us to respond to emergency incidents in the timeliest manner.

### **Private Finance Initiative (PFI)**

Merseyside communities and our workforce will soon benefit from 7 new community resources under a PFI project as we build new Community Fire and Rescue Stations. They will offer modern facilities for all our Firefighters to work, rest and study in private.

Work on the first four Merseyside Community Fire and Rescue Stations at Kirkby, Formby, Bootle and Newton Le Willows is well underway.

Our emergency response continues unaffected whilst building works are ongoing.

At all four sites the work is on schedule for the new Community Fire and Rescue Stations to be operational in May and June 2012.

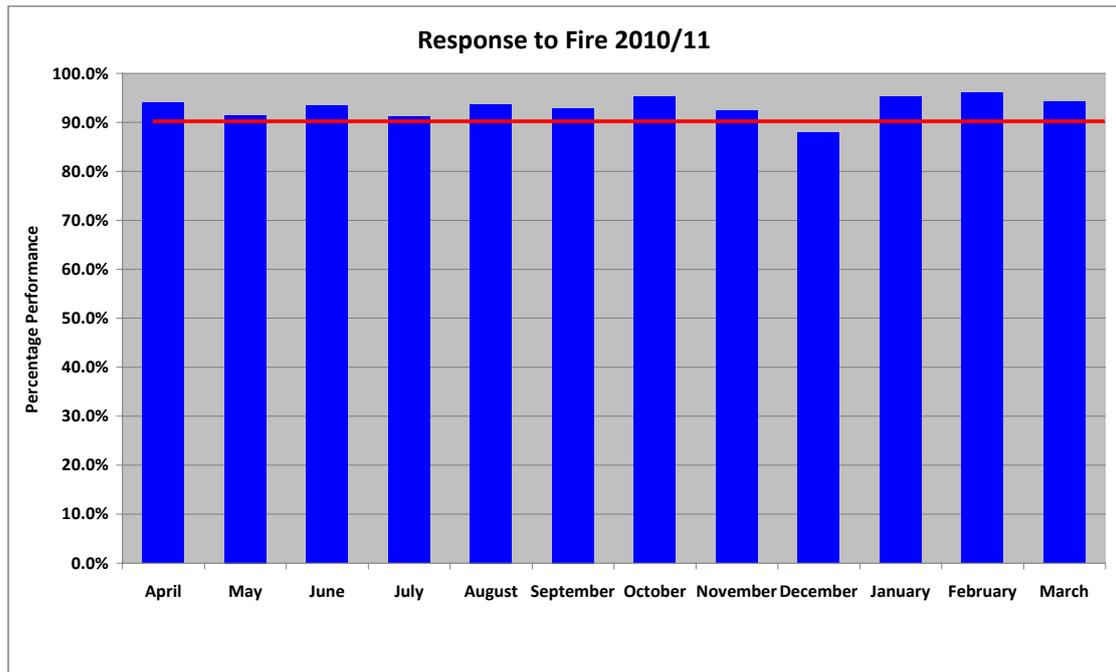
Following completion of these stations, work will commence at Southport, Belle Vale and Birkenhead with the final site due to be completed by July 2013.

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## Our Emergency Response Performance & Activity

In order to ensure we deliver the best emergency response to the people of Merseyside we manage our performance and that of our Firefighters against our published response standards.

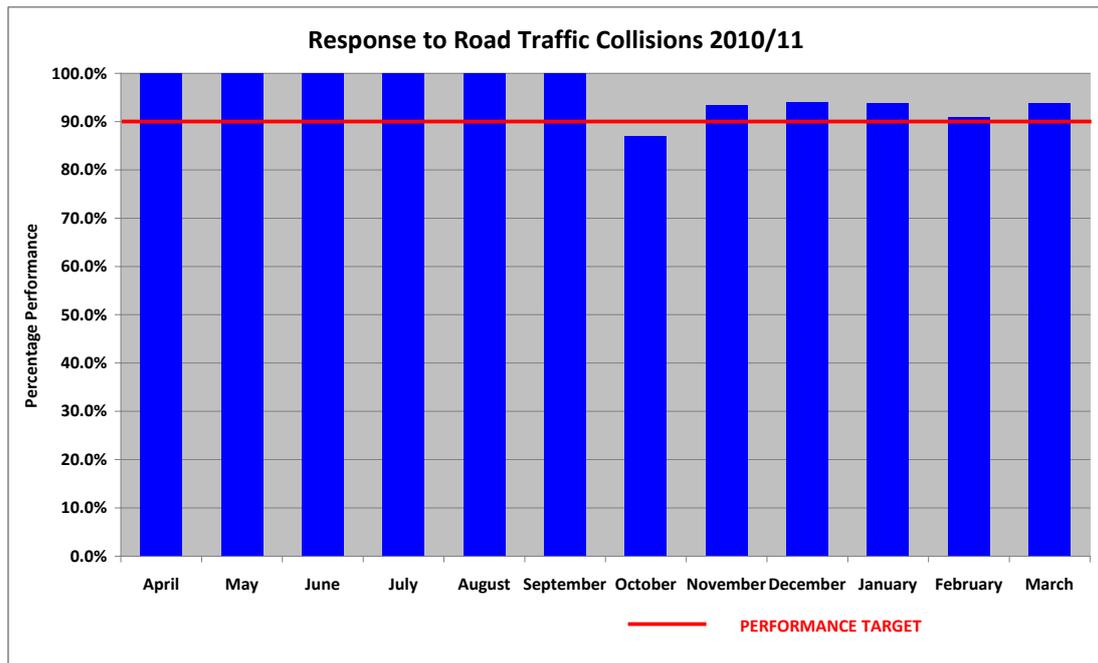
### Response to Fire in Property



Our target of responding to fires within the high, medium and low risk times on 90% of occasions was achieved every month except December 2010; at the time steps were taken to minimise the impact on our operational response due to the extreme weather we all endured in that month on Merseyside.

During the year we attended 3,250 property fires and achieved the standards on 3,024 occasions which is a 93% success rate.

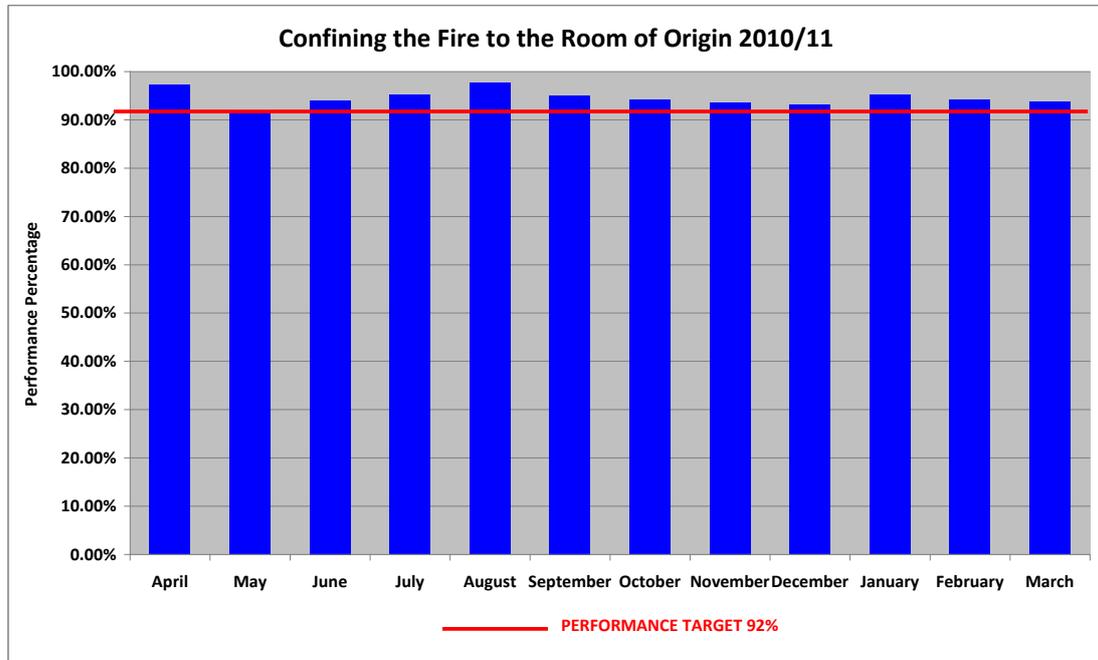
## Response to Road Traffic Collisions



The graph above shows the results for 2010/11. For six months of the year every road traffic collision which occurred and resulted in people being trapped had a fire engine on scene within 8 minutes, achieving a 100% performance outcome. Only in the month of October did we fail to achieve our standard.

## Confining the Fire to the Room of Origin in Fires in the Home

In addition to the previous indicators, we measure how many times we are successful at confining the fire and its effects to the room in which it first started, because this is the most accurate indicator in assessing the effectiveness of our fighting response.



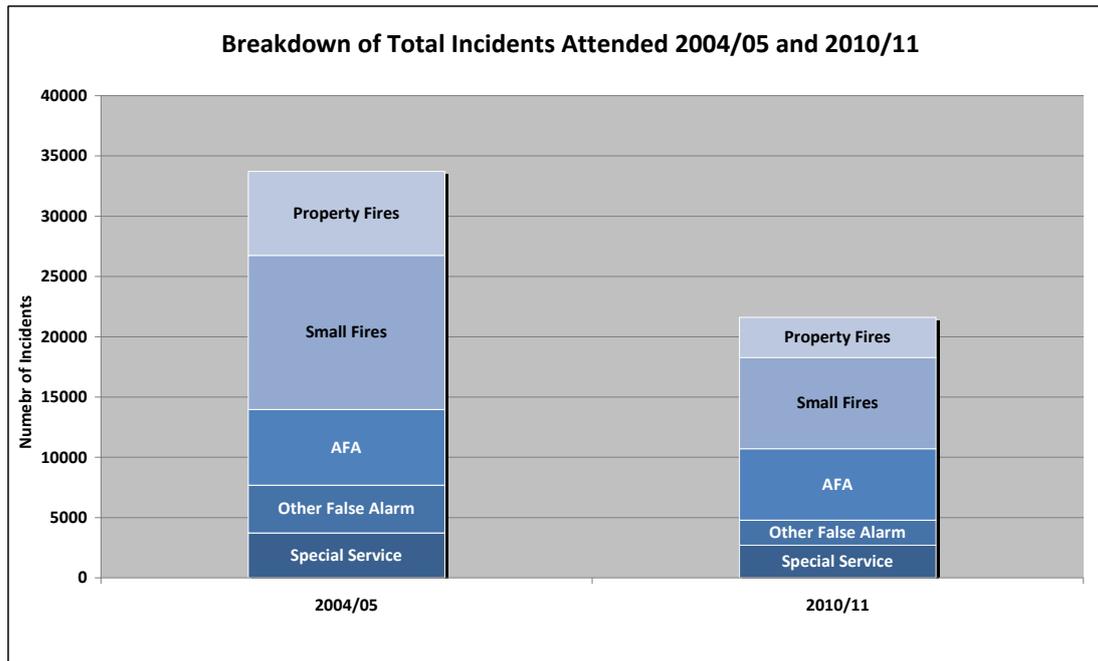
Our target for this indicator was 92%, we achieved this every month except May when we failed by less than half of one percent.

Over the year we attended 1,199 accidental fires in the home and on only 69 occasions did the fire or its effects spread from the room in which the fire started.

This remarkable statistic is testament to the professionalism and effectiveness our Firefighters. It has meant that in 1,129 homes that experienced a fire last year people were able to recover quickly and carry on with their lives.

There is no doubt that the people of Merseyside are safer in their homes than they have ever been from the devastating effects of fire.

## All Incidents Requiring Our Attendance



**Property Fires** – These are actual fires we attend which have occurred in the home, other buildings or transportation.

**Small fires** – fires which are minor in nature, involve items with little or no value (rubbish, open ground) and occur usually as a result of anti social behaviour.

**AFA** – These are false alarms generated automatically by systems monitoring fire alarms in buildings.

**Other False Alarm** – These include calls made with good intent and those which are malicious hoax calls.

**Special Service** – These calls are both life threatening and not, non fire incidents and include all rescues we make, releases from lifts, and chemical incidents.

We have witnessed a 36% reduction in the number of incidents to which we have been called since 2004/5.

Fires involving property have reduced by 52% in this time. This includes fires in the home and all other buildings. There is no doubt that everyone on Merseyside is safer as a result of this reduction in property fires.

Small fires, which are mainly the result of anti social behaviour, still blight our communities, but they have also seen a reduction of 41% since 2004/5. This has made big differences to the quality of life for the people who live in the areas where this activity was concentrated.

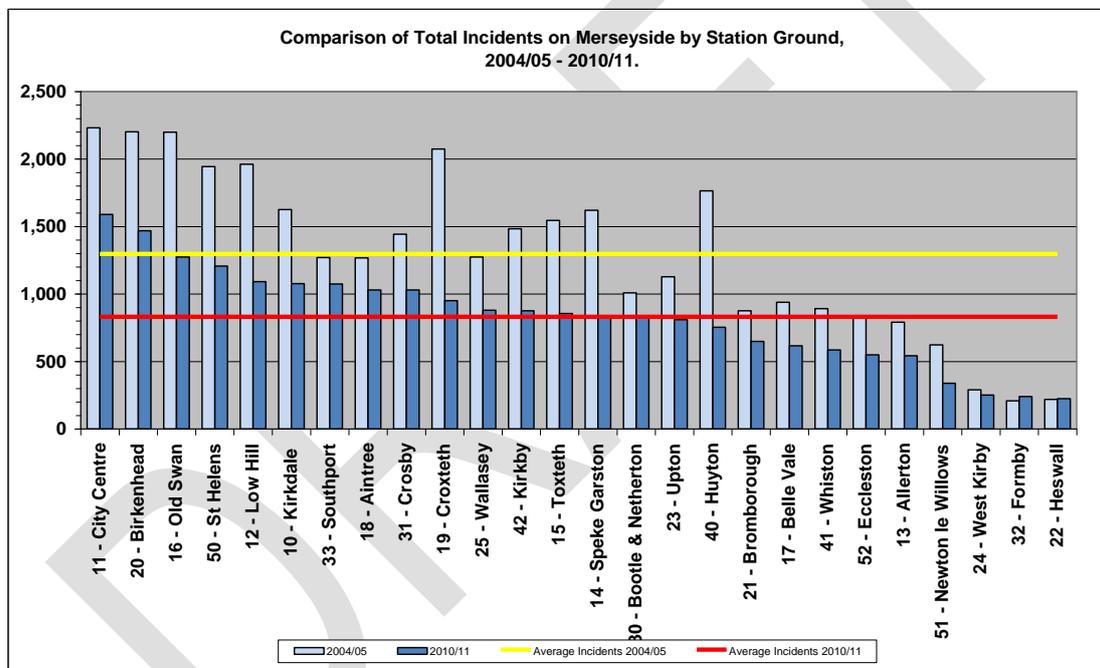
Where we haven't been so successful is in reducing false alarms caused by automatic fire alarms. These incidents have reduced by less than 6% in the same period and still represent a significant waste of money and result in our

fire engines being unnecessarily committed when they could be available to attend real emergencies.

We are proposing to implement a new procedure to ensure that this type of incident will be reduced substantially in the future. This will be achieved by only attending automatic fire alarms in properties used as a domestic dwelling. In other types of property, unless we receive a call confirming that there is a fire we will not send fire engines to the scene, but may send an alternative response to identify the nature of the actuation.

Small fires and automatic equipment false alarms represent 62% of all incidents we attend. That is why reducing these incidents remain as a key priority for us in the coming year.

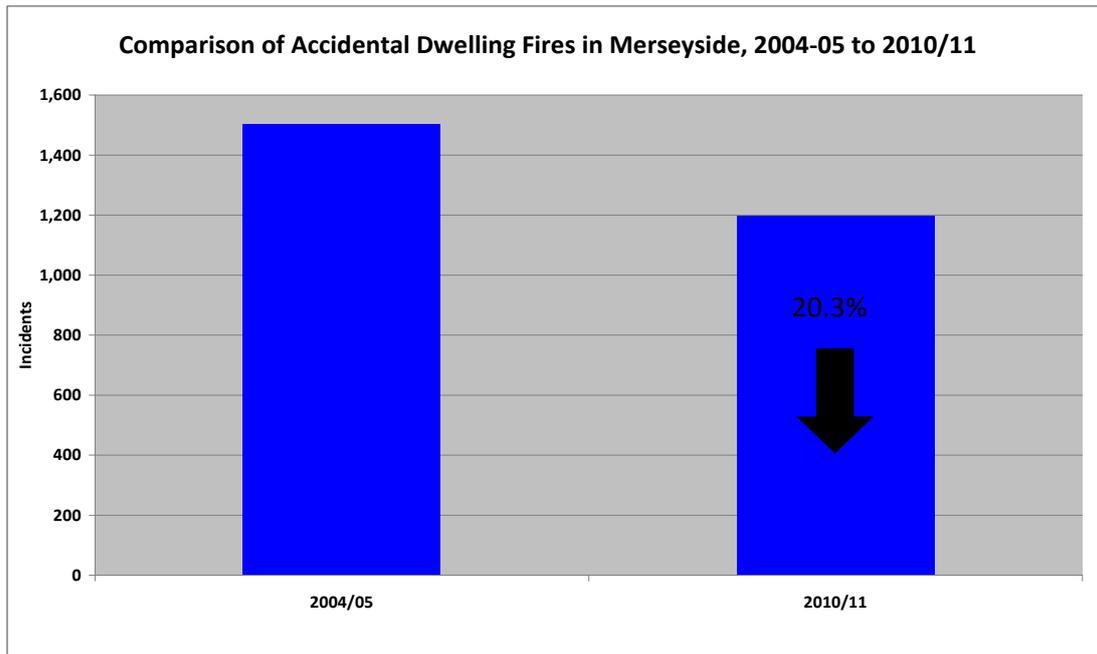
## Incidents Across Merseyside



Merseyside has seen a reduction of 36% in the number of incidents we attend over the last 6 years. Many of our station areas have seen incredible reductions in emergency activity over those years.

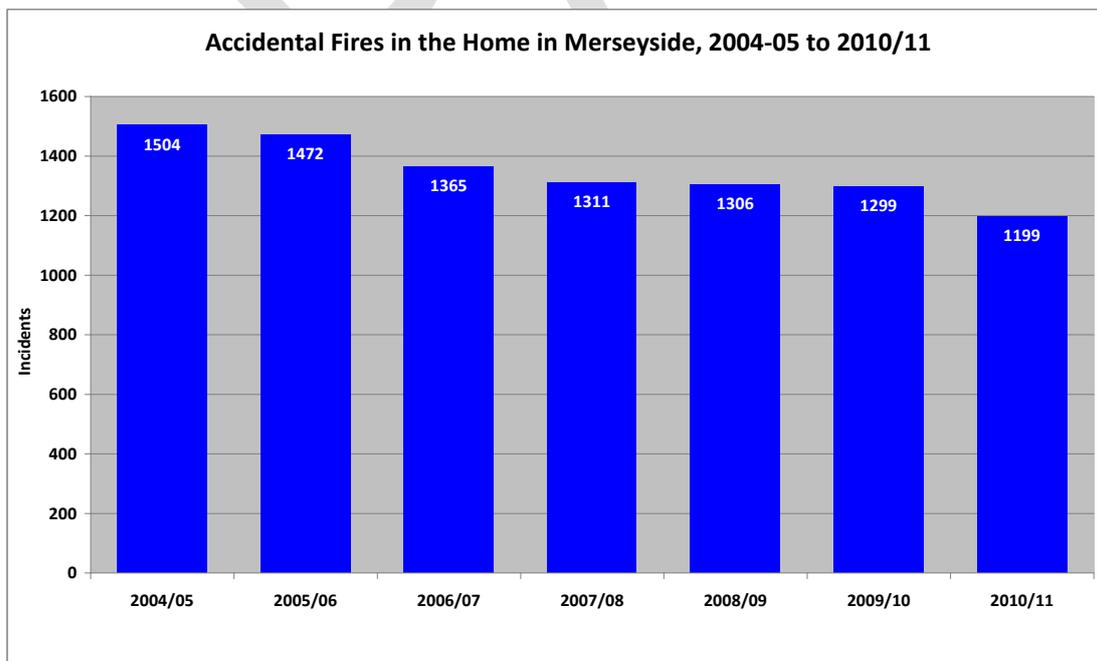
Whilst this picture does not consider absolute risk, we can see across the board the huge changes which have occurred to reduce station activity levels and the work environment that our Firefighters experience.

## Accidental Fires in the Home



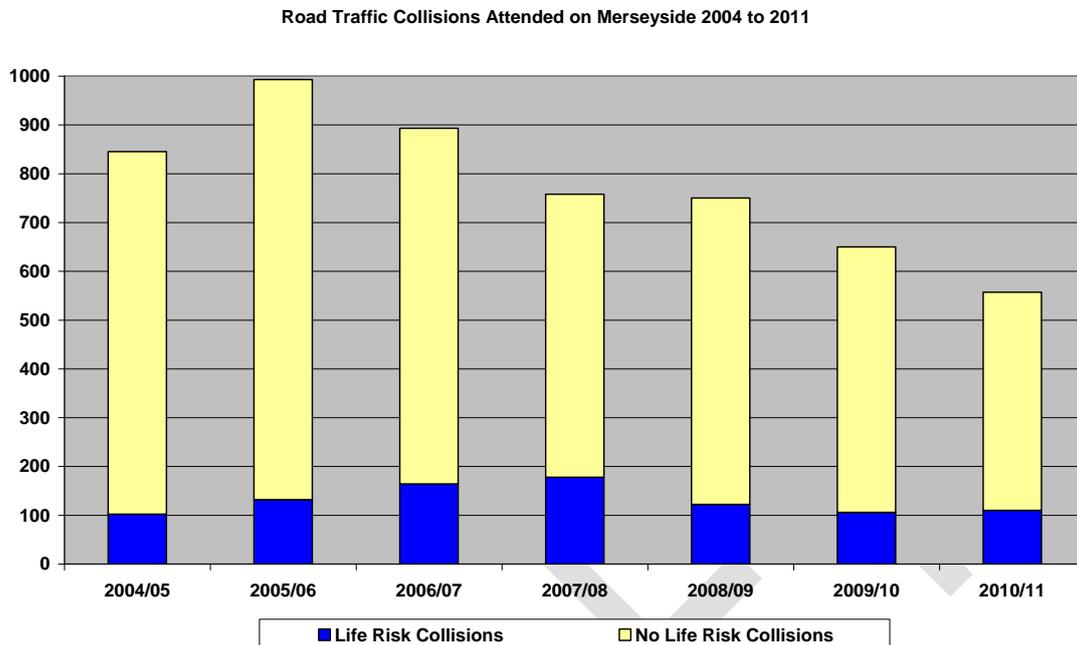
The graph above highlights the positive impact on accidental fires in the home on Merseyside that has been seen over the past 6 years, the incident type which is most likely to pose a significant risk to life.

We cannot however be complacent with these results; we are working to ensure that this reducing trend continues to make people safer in their homes.

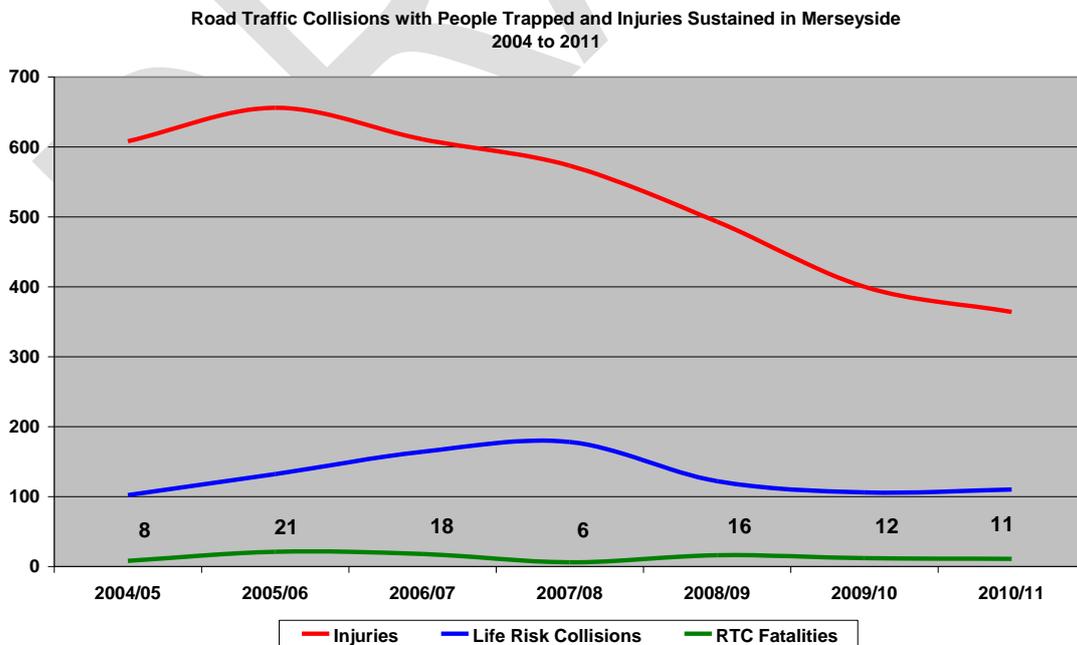


The picture over the last 7 years shows steady downward trend in house fires. Continuing this trend remains a key element of our prevention agenda.

# Road Traffic Collisions

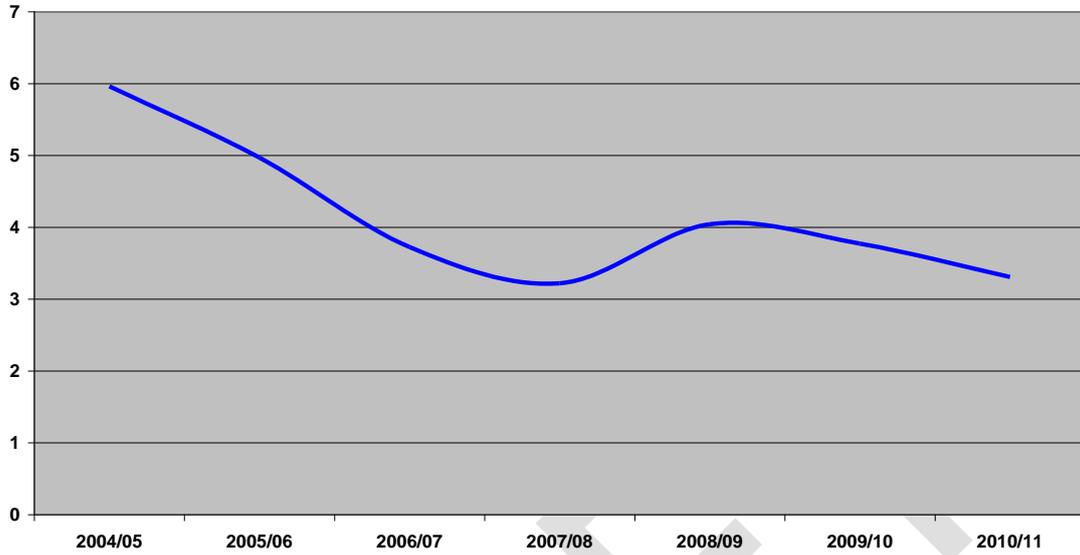


In the above Graph we can see the total number of road traffic collisions we attend is showing a consistent and significant decline, 44% down in just 5 years. The vast majority of these incidents we attend pose no threat to life. However the impact of the minority of collisions which do endanger life is very significant.



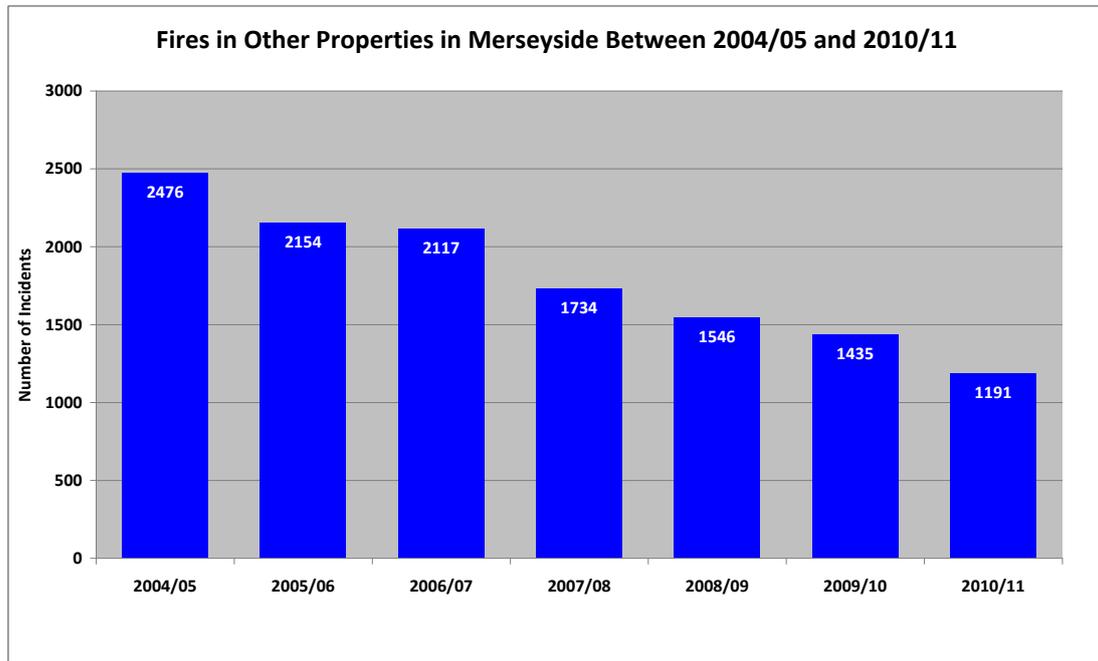
Last year we attended 110 life risk road traffic collisions which resulted in 364 people requiring our assistance to extricate them and to assist in dealing with their injuries.

Average Number of Injuries per Road Traffic Collision on Merseyside  
2004 to 2011



This unacceptable ratio of injuries to collisions shown above; has resulted in the development and implementation of our Road Safety Campaign which is being delivered across Merseyside through 2011.

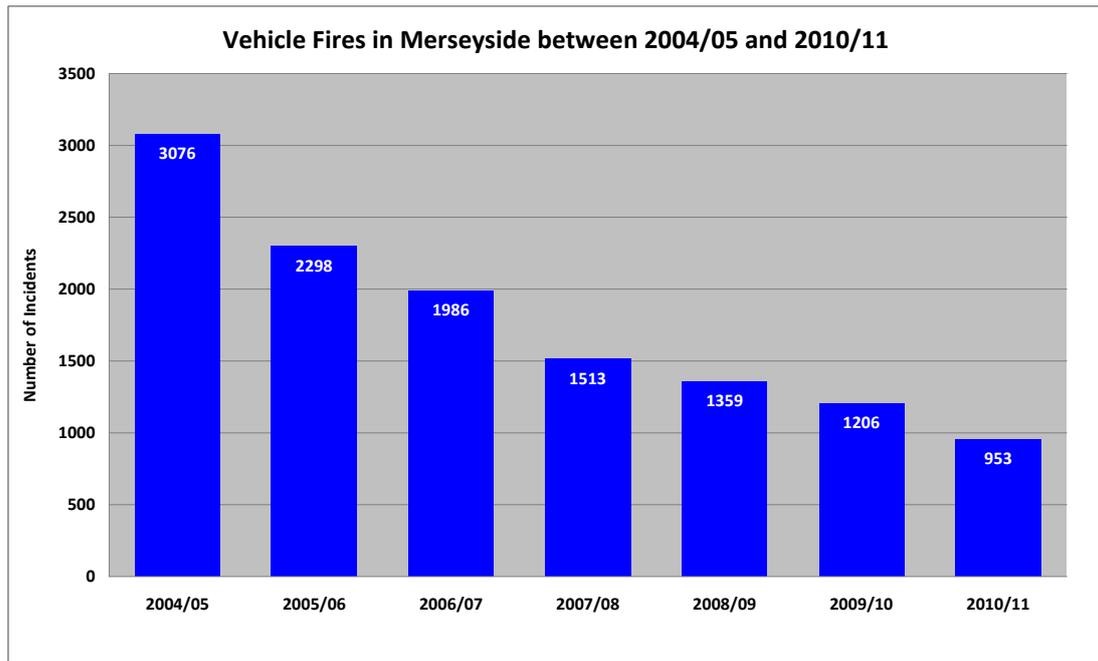
## Fires in Other Properties



These are fires which include; deliberate arson in the home, fires in commercial properties and those open to the public. We can see a far greater rate of decline in the occurrence of these incidents.

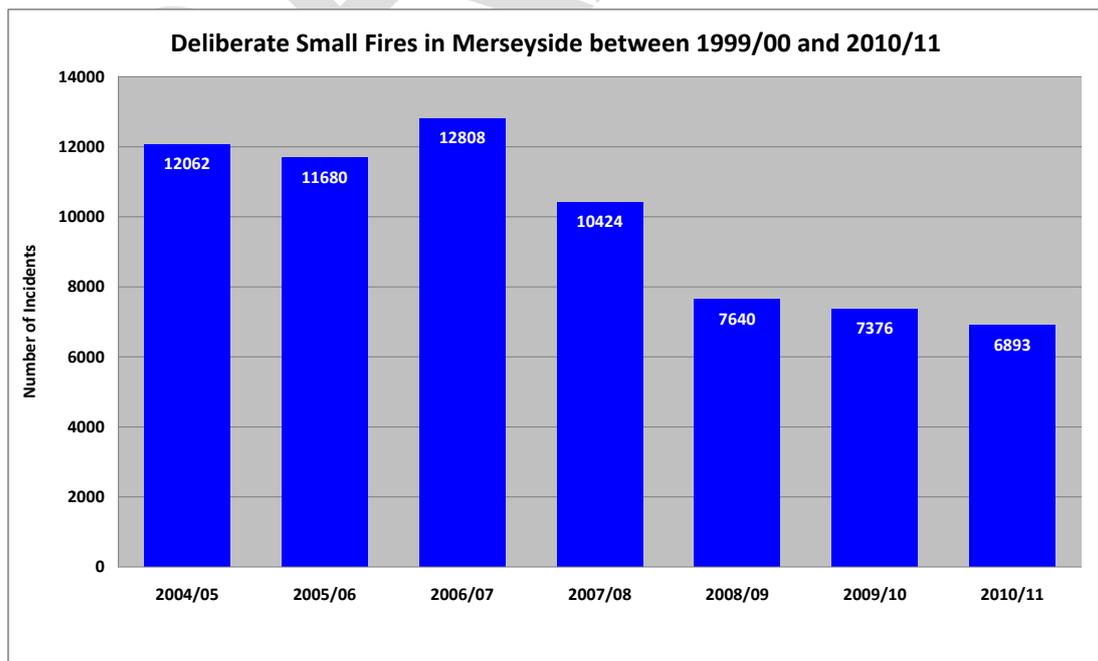
Our focus in this area remains the enforcement of the Fire Safety Order to ensure owners and occupiers have fire safety as their priority. We will also continue our vigorous pursuit of those perpetrating acts of arson.

## Vehicle Fires



Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have established a number of arrangements with local partners which have reduced this type of incident by almost 70% in seven years. We are now identifying new and innovative ways of further reducing these incidents.

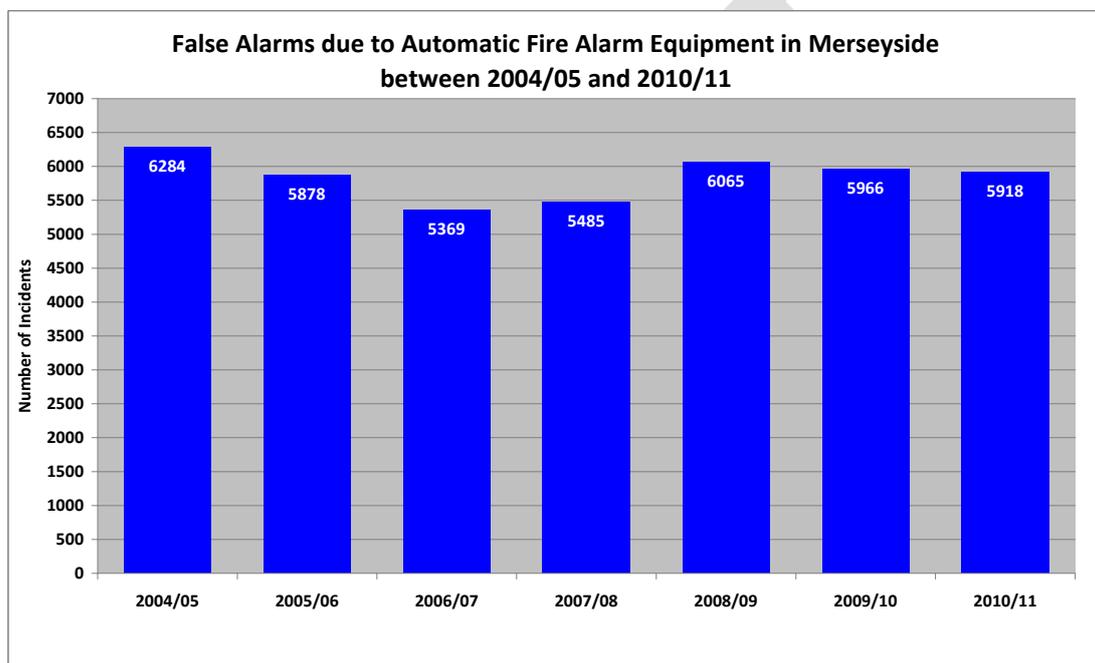
## Fires Resulting from Deliberate Acts of Anti Social Behaviour



It can be seen from this graph that we have reduced the effects on our community and the burden placed on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service resources substantially over the past 7 years. We have been able to achieve this reduction in fires caused as a result of anti social behaviour by using a wide variety of ground breaking prevention and intervention techniques.

These incidents do not usually increase the risks to life from fire; however they do blight our communities, cause untold misery to our residents and consume vast amounts of Fire and Rescue Service resources and public money every year. We intend to continue work to reduce this unlawful and unnecessary behaviour.

### False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Alarms



Of all of the incidents we attend this type has seen the smallest reduction over the last 7 years. This is the second most common incident we attend and again consumes large amounts of our resources unnecessarily. The impact of our proposed new procedures for this type of incident should be evident when we report our performance in next years IRMP.

## Average Daily Number of Incidents Attended within Merseyside

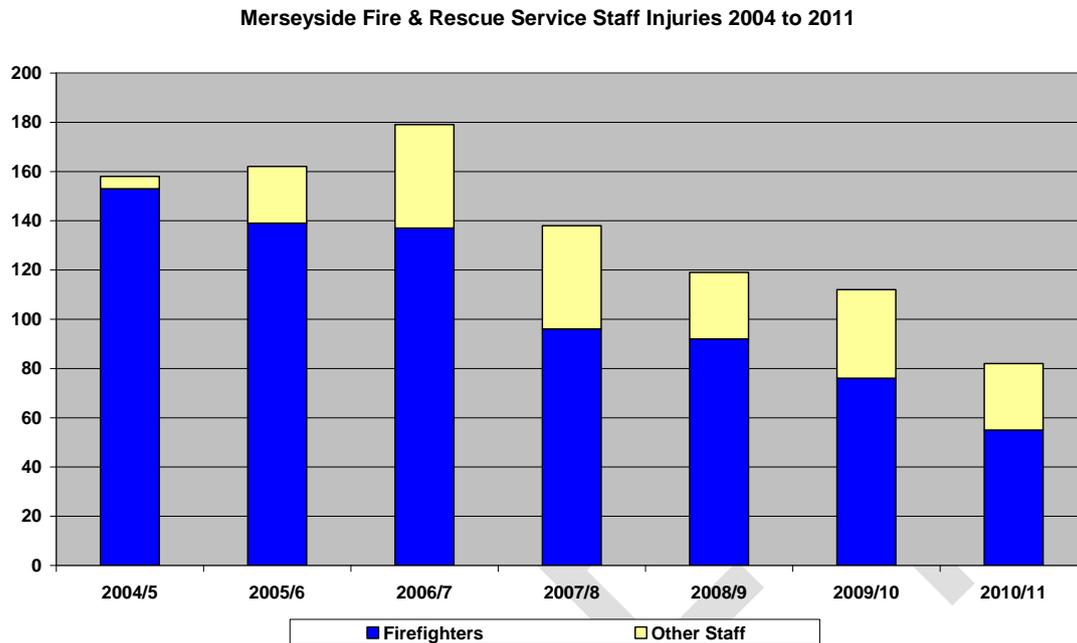
Incident Type	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Accidental Fires in the Home	3.75	3.6	3.57	3.55	3.28
Other Building and Property Fires	5.8	4.75	4.24	3.93	3.26
Vehicle Fires	5.44	4.15	3.72	3.3	2.61
All Antisocial Behaviour Fires	36.84	29.63	22.85	21.88	20.72
False Automatic Fire Alarms	14.7	15.02	16.57	16.31	16.21
Other False Alarms	9.88	8.71	7.4	6.83	5.70
Road Traffic Collisions	2.45	2.08	1.99	1.78	1.53
Other Special Services	7.8	6.59	5.97	5.46	5.90
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>86.66</b>	<b>74.52</b>	<b>66.31</b>	<b>63.05</b>	<b>59.21</b>

Other Special Service Calls include road traffic collisions, rescues from height, extractions from machinery, rescue of animals, hazardous material incidents, rescues from flooding, lock outs/ins and lift releases.

These figures clearly demonstrate how risk has changed over the last five years within Merseyside. Currently we have 42 fire engines available, of which 5 are held in the Dynamic Reserve. This means the remaining 37 fire engines deal with on average 1.6 incidents per day.

These figures and others, feed into the process which allows us to decide what the level of emergency response resources we need.

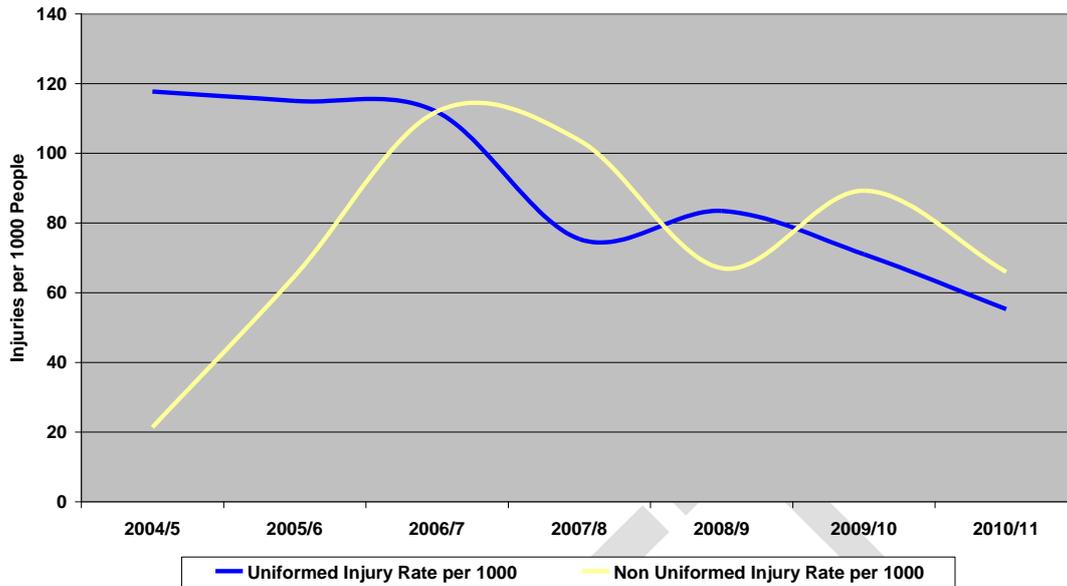
# Staff Injuries



The level of staff injuries have fallen consistently since 2006/7, with 55 Firefighter injuries last year, reducing by nearly 65% since their peak in 2004/5. This is due to the commitment we make to the management of the health and safety of our staff.

The injuries sustained by our other staff, many of whom carry out duties on the front line with our Firefighters are also showing a reduction.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Injuries per 1000 people



This graph shows two distinctly different outcomes; Firefighters are now much safer at work than they were 7 years ago, by nearly 50%. However our non operational staff are far more likely to suffer an injury at work than they were in 2004/5. Statistically our staff are more likely to be injured as a non operational member of the Fire and Rescue Service than they are as an operational Firefighter.

## Consultation Activity and Plans

Consulting and communicating with our communities is important to us, as these people assist us in identifying local risks and determining how best to tackle these local issues.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are committed to providing services that meet the changing needs of the communities of Merseyside. We have, with our partners, put into place a strategic group to ensure that consultation activities are managed within the five Local Authority Districts in a co-ordinated way. By doing this we can use consultation for the whole of Merseyside in a way that assesses needs, customer satisfaction and risks within that community.

As members of the Fire Service Consultation Association (FSCA), we use independent consultants; Opinion Research Services, who have supported numerous consultation research programmes, including local community focus groups as well as surveys which have informed Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's strategic plans.

This helps to ensure that this plan draws on a range of information and views from the local communities and represents the best response to local needs and wishes. Our consultation process encourages greater community participation and overall engagement. We believe that, if members of the public think they are being listened to they are more likely to make suggestions for improving services or ask for information. The Authority will maintain an ongoing dialogue with communities, so that local opinion about options for change can be canvassed at an early stage.

Prior to the commencement of writing this plan, the Service held five local consultation forums one in each of the districts, where people were invited to offer their views on how the Fire Authority delivers its services.

Our past experience of open meetings and public consultation is that we have generally poor attendance and very low actual responses to open consultation. Our current form of consultation guarantees diverse opinions and representative responses to our proposals from the community. We listen to what the respondents have to say, but we do not necessarily agree with or action everything that is raised.

The final report is available on our website at [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)

Some of the key points and comments which were important to those members of the community were;

*“It was accepted in all five Forums that MFRS should continue to have a balanced strategy, across prevention, protection and response services.”*

*“After very full discussion, all five Forums accepted that:*

*MFRS should conduct an emergency cover review with a view to reducing its number of fire engines significantly.”*

*“After very full discussion, all five Forums accepted that MFRS’ 42 fire engines could safely be reduced. Most participants saw this as a way of achieving substantial savings in the context of public expenditure reductions – that is, as an exceptional measure; but some saw emergency cover reviews as normal procedures and said that value-for-money criteria would imply a reduction in fire engines in any case”*

*“Is 10-minutes response time a critical threshold for safety? Perhaps that threshold could be a realistic measurement target. There might be room for even more reductions to be done safely if the target response time is more realistic.”*

*“Initially, all the Forums were unfamiliar with the idea of volunteers – and tended to assume that the term refers to retained duty system fire fighters. However, when their status and roles were explained there was enthusiastic support for the principle of volunteer involvement.”*

*“Overall, the Forums accepted readily the idea that MFRS should market the services of its Training Centre and Merseyside Observatory – because these are specialist services which MFRS is especially well-qualified to offer.”*

*“The Forums collectively supported MFRS collaborating with other FRS and emergency services where possible – for example, on procurement or training – but there was general hostility to the idea of mergers.”*

*“None of the Forums expressed real immediate anxiety about, say, terrorism threats or had any concerns about how well MFRS does its work in this area. The issues that were raised were influenced by the recent inquests into the 7/7 bombings in London – and they included the following:*

- Adequacy and effectiveness of communications equipment*
- Effectiveness of multi-agency training and collaboration*
- Possible effects of health and safety rules in slowing MFRS’ response to emergency dangerous incidents.”*

In addition to this consultation which occurred before the document was written, we will publish the document on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service website ([www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk)) and our Facebook pages immediately after it is approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority. We will also use Twitter to signpost the publication.

We will conduct a follow up forum with some of our original consultation forum members to gain their views on how the draft document reflects their opinions.

Our staff will be made aware of the document via email, which they will all receive, encouraging them to read and comment on the document.

We will also be sending a letter to all of our partners, representative bodies and interested parties, confirming the publication of the IRMP and encouraging them to take part in the consultation, which will run for 12 weeks.

We will provide hard copies of the document where requested.

To have your say, please contact The IRMP Officer at;

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

Or alternatively;

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters  
Bridle Road  
Bootle  
Merseyside  
L30 4YD

### **Document**

The IRMP for 2012/15 is to be produced as an electronic consultation draft, before the final document is published in 2012.

### **Actions to be Undertaken as part of IRMP Consultation**

- Publish the consultation document on the Internet immediately following approval of the IRMP by the Fire & Rescue Authority.
- Issue a press release and brief all local media.
- Notify all employees through e-mail, Hot News & intranet.
- Send a hard copy of the consultation document on request.
- Use our managers to promote the IRMP with local organisations and encourage consultation feedback from staff, public and partners.
- Open formal consultation with the bodies that represent our staff.
- Use our advocates and Fire Support Network to contact the more hard to reach groups within our community.
- Conduct a forum with the assistance of Opinion Research Services consisting of a random sample of members of the public from across Merseyside to discuss our strategic direction within the consultation IRMP document.

## Equality and Diversity

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority recognise the importance of considering and promoting equality in everything that we do.

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty to have due regard to:

:

- a) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) The need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 we are required to

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the duty not later than **31 January 2012** and at least annually thereafter.
- Publish information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are affected by our policies and practices. (This includes information in relation to our employees).
- Prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, which we think we should achieve to further the aims set out in the duty no later than **6 April 2012** and at least every 4 years thereafter.

Our commitment to equality and diversity is a key aspect of how we deliver our services and how we recruit, develop and manage our staff. This embedding of equality and diversity in all our practices and functions has resulted in our being recognised as one of only two Fire and Rescue Services to achieve the Excellent Standard by Peer Assessment in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

We have considered the community profile of Merseyside whilst preparing our IRMP and risk map, looking at the levels of deprivation, age, gender, ethnicity and religion as well as other demographics. This is then combined with the occurrence of incidents in relation to that information we have witnessed over the last three years. We use this information to target our prevention and protection resources at the areas of greatest risk.

We assess all our plans for equality impact.

The full Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

## **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 aim for a 5% reduction in accidental dwelling fires, 20% reduction in fire deaths and 5% reduction in injuries occurring in accidental dwelling fires by 2017.

#### **Objective 2:**

To achieve an appropriate speed and weight of attack standards of our 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 consistent high attainment level against our standards for fires and road traffic collisions.

#### **Objective 3:**

To reduce risk consistently across Merseyside

**Action:** To analyse risk to the ensure changes and developments we have made to our Operational response, prevention and protection activities in our annual plans are continuing to deliver a reduction in risk across Merseyside.

**Target:** Year on year improvement in terms of risk by super output area.

**Objective 4:**

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

**Action:** We aim to provide sufficient weight of attack within a realistic time scale to mitigate damage caused by fire in commercial premises and to safeguard successful restoration of business after the incident.

**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 Order (Fire Safety) 2004.

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.

## **Action Plan**

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 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

#### **Fire Safety Order – 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 enable 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.