

Notice of Motion by Councillor Byrom

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

This Council recognises the excellent work undertaken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service in delivering community safety and prevention initiatives to residents and businesses across Sefton and Merseyside.

The Council, appreciates that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has to deal with a wide range of incidents, and therefore requires the resources to respond as speedily and effectively as possible under difficult financial circumstances.

MFRS through its support to National Resilience, is also required to respond to activities regionally, nationally and internationally; such as response to a potential terrorist threat, severe weather and any incident that may have an impact on critical infrastructure.

MFRS also delivers interventions to the wide ranging needs of our communities, which includes proactive prevention activities in undertaking 'Safe and Well' visits, which targets our most vulnerable residents. These visits go deeper to identify and address the wider health and or lifestyle issues which may, further down the line, lead to an emergency incident or acute intervention from the NHS, Social Services, safeguarding and other wider public services.

MFRS has continued to evolve and reform, working in collaboration with our other emergency services, Health organisations, and local Authority partners, whilst maintaining its commitment to the delivery of our community safety plan.

The Government should recognise the Fire and Rescue Service is a unique public body that plans for risk not demand and therefore should be funded accordingly.

MFRS has experienced the worst budget reductions in the country, which has had a detrimental impact on both front line and support service staff and seen a reduction in the number of fire stations and appliances available to attend emergency calls.

As MFRS budgets and physical firefighting resources continue to be cut, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet local needs and address risk in the communities, the service is at breaking point and has sought to implement a programme of transformation to ensure the risk based needs of local communities are met, supporting the most vulnerable first.

The stark impact of the cuts to MFRS are as follows:

	2010	2017	*2020	
Fire Fighters	990	680	580	
Appliances	42	26	24	
Stations	26	25	22	

*Assumed financial projected cuts until 2020

This Council therefore calls on the Government to;

1. Cease any further cuts to the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority budget
2. Undertake a full risk assessment of the impact of the cuts to date and the degradation of the remaining service
3. Allow MFRA the flexibility to increase Council Tax above the cap without the need for a County wide referendum.
4. Allow more freedom for Fire and Rescue services to explore Income generation without conditions
5. Support a fair increase to Firefighters and support staff pay rates
6. Accept that MFRA has no free capital available to transfer to revenue expenditure

Finally, This Council on behalf of the citizens of Sefton and Merseyside wish to place on record its full hearted thanks and appreciation for the work undertaken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, and all its Fire Fighters and support staff for their dedication, commitment and professionalism in keeping our communities safe in unprecedented times.