

Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Policy and Resources Committee



R. Groves
Monitoring Officer

Tel: 0151 296 4000
Extn: 4122 Mia Griffiths

Our ref MG/RG

Date: 12 January 2026

Dear All,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** to be held at **1.00pm** on **TUESDAY, 20TH JANUARY, 2026** in the Wirral Suite at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

This meeting is webcast live to YouTube and is available at the following link:
https://youtube.com/live/_2m0q9w3UEE?feature=share

Yours faithfully,

PP – M Griffiths

Monitoring Officer

Encl.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2026

AGENDA

Members

Councillor James Roberts (Chair)
Councillor Jeanie Bell
Councillor Leslie T. Byrom
Councillor Dave Hanratty
Councillor Grahame McManus
Councillor Lynn O'Keeffe
Councillor Heather Westhead
Councillor Andrew Makinson
Councillor Lesley Rennie

1. **Apologies**
To consider apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To consider declarations of interest for any of the items on the agenda.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 14)
To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 11th December 2025.
4. **New Dimensions 2 Procurement of Flood Pumps** (Pages 15 - 18)
To consider the New Dimensions 2 Procurement of Flood Pumps report (CFO/24/256)
5. **Procurement of Next Generation Suits** (Pages 19 - 22)
To consider the Procurement of Next Generation Suits report (CFO/35/2526).

This page is intentionally left blank

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2025

MINUTES

Present: Councillor James Roberts (Chair), Councillor Leslie T. Byrom CBE, Councillor Dave Hanratty, Councillor Heather Westhead, Councillor Andrew Makinson, Councillor Jeanette Banks, Councillor Edna Finneran and Councillor Janet Grace

Also present:

Chief Fire Officer	Nick Searle
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Dave Mottram
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Ged Sheridan
Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
Mointoring Officer	Ria Groves

8. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Jeanie Bell (Councillor Jeanette Banks attended as an alternate), Grahame McManus (Councillor Edna Finneran attended as an alternate), Lynn O’Keeffe (Councillor Jan Grace attended as alternate) and Lesley Rennie.

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items on the agenda.

10. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 October 2025 be approved as an accurate record.

11. Financial Review 2025-26 July to September

Director of Finance and Procurement, Mike Rea presented the report and provided Members with assurance that the approved budget remained robust and that the current expenditure forecast could be contained within the available resources whilst providing updates on the Revenue Budget, Capital Budget, Reserves, and Treasury Management, covering the period from April to September 2025.

Members were advised that budget movements in the second quarter related to the planned use of reserves; adjustments to external funding, for the delivery of specific projects; and self-balancing virements. As all adjustments were self-balancing, they did not affect the approved net budget requirement, which remained at £77.934 million.

As a result of one-off savings, a total saving of £1.35m had been identified and Members were asked to approve allocating this amount to increase the Clothing Reserve by £850,000 and the Capital Investment Reserve by £500,000 to support future expenditure on fire kit and equipment replacement and to fund capital projects to reduce borrowing levels.

Paragraph 18 of the report outlined the changes to the capital programme since the last review and that during this quarter the £1.58m increase was funded through specific grants and revenue. During the quarter, the level of capital borrowing for 2025/26 decreased from £41.982m to £40.380m, primarily due to the £2.0m drawdown from Capital Reserves agreed at the Q1 financial review.

This reduction also reflected a net adjustment of £448,000 following changes in capital receipts: the removal of the planned sale of Vesty 5A (required for ICT Managed Services provision), an anticipated increase from the sale of Richie Avenue stores, and a £0.050m reduction in the capital programme relating to ICT software.

Members' attention was drawn to the table on page 25 outlining reserve movements during the quarter and advised that the General Reserve remained unchanged at £3.9m.

Paragraphs 26 to 31 on pages 16 to 18 of the report outlined Treasury Management Performance which was consistent with the approved treasury management strategy for 2025/26.

Councillor Les Byrom confirmed that the report showed the Authority's financial position backward and forward looking which allowed Members to understand the level of reserves and how much was capital. This reflected how matters have been managed and controlled and provided confidence to Members.

Councillor Dave Hanratty queried whether the debt of £33.7m was what was anticipated at end of year and if it was on target. Mike Rea confirmed that this would not change and was on target.

It was noted that there was a number of loans with a fixed interest rate.

Councillor Dave Hanratty asked about Write-offs and if there was any idea what these might be. It was confirmed that the above £33.7m debt related to the Authority's borrowing and Write-off of outstanding debtors would be confirmed within future reports.

Councillor James Roberts said he felt it was useful to have £1.350m underspend which was a relatively small sum of money however he queried whether the monies resulted from vacancies which you would want filled and that the vacancies were only short term based. Mike Rea advised that some of the vacancies were due to retirement and others resulted from external funding.

Councillor Jeanette Banks stated that she felt it was important that the money was used for what the Authority needed and passed on her thanks for the content of the report

RESOLVED that;

- a) the contents of the report be noted;
- b) the use of the forecast £1.350m savings to fund an increase in the Clothing Reserve £0.850m and Capital Investment Reserve £0.500m to enable future service expenditure relating to the replacement of fire kit and equipment and to fund capital expenditure to reduce the level of capital borrowing be approved;
- c) the proposed revenue and capital budget alignments be approved and;
- d) the Director of Finance and Procurement be instructed to continue to work with budget managers to maximise savings in 2025/26 and use any savings to reduce the level of capital borrowing.

12. Treasury Management Interim Report 2025/26

Mike Rea, Director of Finance and Procurement, presented the report updating Members on the Authority's requirements to meet the CIPFA code of practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and its performance. It was explained that these codes required the Authority to review its Treasury Management activities during the year to ensure they were consistent with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and that they had remained within the approved Prudential Indicators.

Mike Rea advised that the report met the requirement, and it outlined the treasury management activities and performance for the first half of the financial year. The executive summary on page 48 paragraph 7 summarised the key points on performance so far. Members were informed that the Authority had envisaged that new long-term borrowing of £5.000m may be required in 2025/26 and that no new borrowing had been arranged in the first half of 2025/26. Financial Investments as of 30th September 2025 stood at £66.2m, with associated income of £1.252m earned in the first half of the year. The Bank of England (BOE) base rate had decreased from 4.25% at the start of the financial year, to its current level announced on 6th August 2025 of 4.00%. Longer term Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) had increased during the first half of the year by 0.35% from 5.62% at the start of the year to 5.97% as of 30th September 2025.

Members were assured that Treasury Management activity for 2025/26 had been carried out in compliance with the relevant codes and statutes and within the borrowing and treasury management limits approved by the Authority as part of the budget setting process.

Councillor James Roberts stated that the Monetary Policy Committee were due to meet in December and it had been predicted it may be as low as 3.25%. He queried at what point would it become economical to refinance. Mike Rea

responded advising that fixed rate loan early repayment penalties continued to make it uneconomical at low interest rates.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

13. Accidental Dwelling Fire Analysis Between 2005/06 and 2024/25

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report advising Members that the report detailed the historical analysis of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires between 2005/06-2024/25 and that it offered an in-depth analysis of all fires including causes. The Chief Fire Officer explained that page 57 of the report underpinned the Services fire safety strategy, and the analysis supported the introduction of other initiatives such as Older Persons Day and Winter Warm initiatives. Members' attention was drawn to Page 65 and it was explained that there had been an increase to seven fatalities for 2024/25 but this was a reduction from 2022-23.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this would enhance a targeted approach and data would be used to identify vulnerable members of the public. It was noted that the Authority would engage with people already known to other professional services to assist in identifying risks within the community.

Councillor Andrew Makinson expressed his thanks for a very detailed report although noted there was no breakdown on housing type and tenure which would have been useful. He queried if it was particularly prevalent in high rise accommodation.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Ged Sheridan explained that the annual reports produced by the Strategy and Performance Department contained that data and that this report showed historical data which was being used to anticipate risk and evolve the Authority's strategy.

Councillor Jan Grace noted that page 64 displayed that fire fatalities were a relatively rare occurrence, and fires were a lot less frequent, albeit that there were new challenges ahead like Lithium-Ion batteries.

Councillor Jeanette Banks also commended the report and expressed her thanks for the amount of work completed within communities which helped people to understand where dangers were and stated that this would be imperative for future planning.

Councillor Les Byrom referred to pages 71-72, smoke alarm analysis stating that types of detectors were changing and as the equipment modernised an analysis of the impact on the Service would be helpful.

Councillor Dave Hanratty acknowledged that it had been a massive task to collate this information, and the report had identified the most vulnerable using data and how it was important to use intelligence to target demographics.

Councillor Heather Westhead stated that figures displayed that 57.7% had a disability (hearing impaired) and queried if work was being done for those hard of hearing. Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Ged Sheridan confirmed that the Authority had outreach support workers to target the most vulnerable and also used a visual vibration for deaf people.

Councillor Jeanette Banks asked if the Authority had any influence on house builders regarding what they had to put in place, and it was confirmed that the Authority worked closely with them and were consulted. The Protection Teams also gave strategic guidance using new technology.

Councillor James Roberts said it was clear from the data that the Authority were heading in the right direction and only having one death during 2023/24 had been an excellent achievement. It was queried about the rate per head of population as Wirral appeared to be an outlier and asked if there was any reason for this.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Ged Sheridan confirmed the strategy focused on pan-Merseyside in terms of targeted prevention however teams had been asked to review each district's data to see if bespoke targeting could be introduced.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

14. Corporate Risk Register 2025-26 April-Sept Update

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report which informed Members of the current risks contained within the Corporate Risk Register including updates for the period April to September 2025. Members were advised that an external review had been sought about how risks would be recorded moving forward and that proposals were being implemented to include a new format for capturing risks from department level upwards and this new approach would be used in the preparation of the 2026/27 risk register.

Councillor Les Byrom said that many organisations were looking at global risks which were outside of the Authority's control, and he stated that there was a need to concentrate on the risks that were able to be controlled.

RESOLVED that the updated Corporate Risk Register for 2025/26 which incorporates the status of those risks to September 2025 be approved.

15. Statement of Assurance 2024/2025

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report highlighting the purpose to request Members to consider and approve the Merseyside Fire Authority Statement of Assurance 2024/25 for publication on the website.

Councillor Les Byrom stated that Members could be proud of the Service and all the hard work delivered by staff who contribute to keep the public safe and that he would sign the Statement of Assurance 2024/25 with great pride.

Councillor Jan Grace added that she felt it was commendable and expressed her thanks.

Councillor James Roberts agreed with Councillor Les Byrom that this was something the Authority could be proud of.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the content of the within this report be noted;
- b) the Authority's draft Statement of Assurance 2024/25 be approved; and
- c) the Statement of Assurance 2024/25, be signed by the Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

16. Service Delivery Plan 2025-26 Q2 July-Sep Update

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report noting the purpose to scrutinise performance of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service against the objectives, performance targets and outcomes set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2025/26 for the period July to September 2025 (Q2) and approve the document.

Councillor James Roberts queried why the Authority had not recorded false alarms in the total figures. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle responded that the Service did not want to prevent people making calls as false alarms or this to be seen as a negative as the Authority actively encouraged the public to call and request their assistance.

Councillor Andrew Makinson stated that the Attendance Standards of 96.5% were fantastic, however it would be useful to see figures for those who did not meet the standard. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle responded that the Authority would look to provide further details on that and assured Members that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service attendance rates were outstanding.

RESOLVED that the attached Service Delivery Plan reports (Appendices A-K) for publication on the website be approved.

17. Relocation Assistance Policy

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report highlighting the publication of the relocation assistance policy which supported ongoing external recruitment. It was noted that the People Plan outlined how the Authority intended to explore all avenues for increasing the diversity of the workforce by strengthening existing positive action initiatives to attract a diverse range of talent. Members were advised that this policy would help to remove potential barriers in recruiting operational roles as there was no longer an absolute requirement to reside within Merseyside boundaries as available duty patterns

took into account home addresses. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle explained that this would offer support in recruiting Senior Officer Operational roles transferring into the Service and remove any potential barriers to expand the scope of applicants.

Councillor Andrew Makinson stated that although it would be impossible to predict how much it would cost in any particular year, he would be interested to know how many posts would qualify for this assistance. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle explained that two Officers had been recruited from other Fire and Rescue Services this year, but he was unsure overall how many posts would be covered by this Policy. Director of People and Organisational Development, Nick Mernock confirmed that this Policy would be utilised for posts which were difficult to fill and not for generic posts. The Authority would look at the requirements of the role on a post-by-post basis prior to advertising.

Councillor Jeanette Banks queried whether the Authority sighted better recruitment and if we they were able to attract people from other areas and Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle confirmed that the Authority had numerous enquiries from applicants wanting to transfer who could potentially utilise this policy.

Councillor Les Byrom explained that this Policy would not mean an increase in budget and the objective was to enable the Authority to take on the best staff and improve the gender imbalance and it would be a useful tool to assist in hitting targets.

Councillor James Roberts queried why there was a £7,500 cap and the Director of People and Organisational Development, Nick Mernock confirmed this was based on national consensus across the sector.

Councillor Jeanette Banks queried whether the offer would increase with inflation. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle advised that the Authority would see how it worked moving forward and monitor it.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- b) the Relocation Assistance Policy be approved.

18. Pay Policy 2025

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report advising Members of the publication of the annual pay policy in line with section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. It was explained that the pay awards for 2025, which had been agreed and implemented covering Grey and Green Book colleagues' agreement, was yet to be reached for 2025 pay awards for Red Book colleagues.

Members were advised that salary levels were negotiated through the NJC each year and all Fire Authorities then implemented the agreed awards.

Councillor Les Byrom advised that the regionally adjusted National Minimum Wage was looked at and that members of the NJC believed that the Authorities should be remunerating staff for the tremendous job they do.

RESOLVED that;

- a) publication of the Authority's Pay Policy be approved; and
- b) the pay awards for 2025 agreed and implemented covering Grey and Green Book colleagues, however agreement has yet to be reached over a 2025 pay award for our Red Book (Craft) colleagues be noted.

19. New Dimensions 2 Procurement of USAR K9 Vehicles

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report to inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure 17 x Search Dog Vehicles (K9 Vehicles), as part of the New Dimensions 2 (ND2) Programme that supported National Resilience.

Members were asked to note the contents of the report and approve the award of the contract for 17 x K9 vehicles as part of ND2 programme to Ford Motor Co at a total cost of £1.1m. Members were advised that ND2 was a national capability uplift programme that supported UK National Resilience and that these vehicles would form part of a range of solutions and quotes had been secured for a similar vehicle to one currently in use.

It was advised that this purchase would not impact the Authority budget as all funding came from MHCLG as part of the ND2 USAR project and they would be distributed around the wider UK Fire & Rescue Service once ready.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- b) the award of the contract to the Ford Motor Company, for 17 x K9 vehicles at a total purchase cost of approximately £1,100,000 be approved.

20. New Dimensions 2 Procurement of USAR Power Tools

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report to inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure power tools and lighting equipment, as part of the Authority's role as Lead Authority in supporting UK National Resilience and the Urban Search and Rescue capability through the award of the contract to TW Engineering Co. Limited at a total cost of £717,487.81.

Members were advised that this purchase would enhance the search and rescue response capability directly and the procurement procedure was compliant with the Authority's contract standing orders and the public contract regulations.

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle gave assurance that the Deputy Chief Fire Office was overseeing USAR as the strategic lead on New Dimensions and said it was a great privilege for the Service to be able to procure this equipment.

Councillor Jeanette Banks said that this was a massive amount of work for the Authority and felt that the Authority should be applauded as they were taking the strain from a lot of other Authorities.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- b) the award of the contract to TW Engineering Co. Ltd for the purchase of the equipment listed at a total cost of £717,487.81 be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 20 January 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 JANUARY 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/34/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON	REPORT AUTHOR:	GROUP MANAGER, MICHAEL DALE
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD, PAUL HITCHEN, HVP CAPABILITY TEAM, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	NEW DIMENSIONS 2 PROCUREMENT OF FLOOD PUMPS		

APPENDICES:	NONE
--------------------	-------------

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure 39 x HFS14000 Flood Pumps and Coupling Sets, as part of the New Dimensions 2 (ND2) Programme that supports National Resilience.

Recommendation

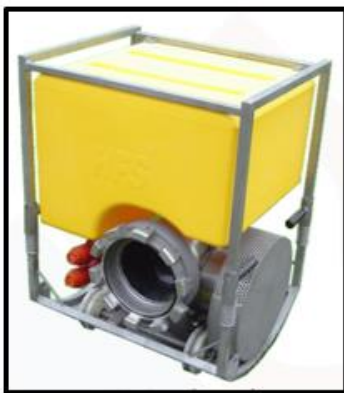
2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report; and
 - b) approve the award of the contract to Angloco Ltd for 39 x HFS14000 Flood Pumps and Coupling Sets, at a total cost of £1,793,040.

Introduction and Background

3. ND2 is a national capability uplift programme that supports National Resilience (NR). The programme is authorised and funded by UK Government via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) are the Lead Authority for NR. Part of the national capability provides assets for High Volume Pumps (HVP) – Flood Response.
4. The original New Dimension programme identified and delivered national assets which enhanced the Fire & Rescue response to a range of catastrophic incidents, including natural and deliberate events, and specifically included response to wide area flooding following extreme weather events and other disasters.
5. The HVP Capability currently have 46 HVP first response assets, supported by a number of strategically located support assets. The assets are primarily used to meet the risks and threats from both wide-area flooding and major fires, recent

examples being Toddbrook Reservoir to prevent a catastrophic collapse of the dam after heavy rainfall, and in 2014 the Somerset Levels and Thames Valley area floods, where the assets were used extensively. Additionally, although not related to National Resilience, HVPs are often deployed to support local incidents to enhance the water strategy plan.

6. Following a strategic review of the capability, and review of projected requirements to address risk, it has been identified that a HFS14000 Flood Pump, which can deliver high flow capability, is a major enhancement to the response model, operating from 39 first response sets. The proposal is for each HVP set to carry two pumps, the current HFS3000 (multi-purpose pump) and the new HFS14000, which will allow the operators to switch the pump dependent on incident type. This enhancement will effectively double the pumping capacity in a flood scenario:



7. The procurement of the HFS14000 and Rapid Coupling Sets forms part of a range of solutions in the wider project of ND2 and will enhance the HVP response capability.
8. The HFS14000 will be available via a support vehicle to the primary asset. The strategic deployment has been considered in relation to location availability around the country and to enhance National Resilience.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement. The specification ensures it would meet all current operating requirements for the HVP assets and would effectively provide an interchangeable pump option.
10. The design and selection ensure safe operation in HVP flood environments, ensuring safety across all personnel roles regardless of background, identity or physical characteristics.

Staff Implications

11. All staff will be required to complete initial training on the HFS14000 prior to operational use. It is envisaged that the training will be quick and simple to deliver

as the HFS14000 will be operated in line with current processes and largely use the current ancillary equipment.

Legal Implications

12. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Procurement Department have identified that the route to market is by direct award to Angloco Limited. The HFS14000 pump is manufactured by Hytrans Systems B.V in the Netherlands. Angloco Limited are the sole distributor of Hytrans equipment in the United Kingdom.
13. The justification for direct award falls under schedule 5, section 5(a) of the Procurement Act 2023, whereby only one supplier can provide the goods and there are no reasonable alternatives to the goods being procured.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. Funding for the HFS14000 Flood Pump is provided by MHCLG as part of the ND2 HVP project.
15. The procurement of 39 x HFS14000 Flood Pumps and Coupling Sets comes to a total cost of £1,793,040.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

16. Risk management for the procurement and implementation is monitored and addressed by the ND2 Programme. Standard operating procedures will be developed and assured along with training, and risk assessments completed, prior to mobilisation and operational deployment.

Environmental Implications

17. The procurement aligns with environmental protection goals by enhancing the current capability and providing a significantly increased pumping capability. This will assist communities in restoration to normality following extreme weather events.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

18. The recommendation supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision and purpose by allowing crews to respond faster, more effectively, and contribute to the saving of lives. It ensures responder and public safety during complex emergency operations, thereby reducing the impact on communities, and improves resilience and readiness for major incidents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
ND2	New Dimensions 2 Programme
NR	National Resilience
HVP	High Volume Pump

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 JANUARY 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/35/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, PAUL MURPHY	REPORT AUTHOR:	AREA MANAGER, PAUL MURPHY, DAN CARTWRIGHT
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD, CHRIS NOAKES		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROCUREMENT OF NEXT GENERATION SUITS		
APPENDICES:	NONE		

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the proposed procurement to procure Next Generation (NextGen) suits as part of the National Resilience DIM Uplift Programme.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report; and
 - b) approve the award of a contract to the West Midlands Police Crime & Commissioner for £450,725.40 to procure NextGen suits from the Multi-Agency Strategic Reserve.

Introduction and Background

3. The next phase of the DIM Uplift Programme focuses on the deployment and operationalisation of NextGen protective suits. The timely delivery of training and the issue of NextGen suits across host Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) is now a critical programme priority.
4. This phase is fully aligned with JESIP principles and strengthens interoperability across all three blue-light services. The introduction of NextGen suits enhances collective capability, supports integrated CBRN response arrangements, and ensures consistency of operational practice in line with NR requirements.

Equality and Diversity Implications

5. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement of NextGen. The NextGen suits are individually sized specialised protective equipment designed to ensure safe operation in CBRN environments, prioritising safety across all personnel roles regardless of background or identity.

Staff Implications

6. There are no staff implications as the proposed contract would provide service continuity.

Legal Implications

7. The route to market would be for the Authority to contract with the West Midlands Police Crime & Commissioner, for the NextGen suits as manufactured by Blucher.
8. Schedule 2 (Exempted Contracts) of the Procurement Act 2023 allows for such contracts under paragraph 3 (Horizontal Arrangements) within Part 1 Counterparty Exempted Contracts.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

9. In January 2025, the Authority received dedicated funding from the HSG, including £450,725.40 ring-fenced for NextGen suits. This funding must be applied in line with the phased NextGen acquisition schedule to ensure programme continuity and uninterrupted operational capability.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

10. Any delay in procurement poses a risk of creating a critical gap in CBRN response capabilities.
11. Without NextGen continuity, the FRS may face heightened risks to interoperability, as NextGen is the standard for multi-agency response coordination with NHS and Police.
12. Departing from this standard could undermine both health and safety standards and reduce the efficacy of multi-agency CBRN responses, especially in the event of large-scale or catastrophic incidents.

Environmental Implications

13. The procurement of NextGen from a Multi-agency Strategic Reserve aligns with sustainability goals by maintaining existing equipment specifications, thereby reducing the environmental impact associated with introducing new PPE.
14. Aligning with the Police and NHS using the current NextGen suits avoids additional manufacturing demands, minimises waste from discontinued

equipment, and promotes responsible environmental practices within the procurement process.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

15. The NextGen Replacement Strategy supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service’s vision as the Lead Authority for National Resilience of being the best in the UK by:
1. Ensuring Readiness: Securing reliable, compliant NextGen equipment enables swift, effective responses to CBRN incidents, directly enhancing public safety.
 2. Prioritising Safety: Continuity with standardised NextGen minimises health and safety risks for both personnel and the public.
 3. Fostering Collaboration: Maintaining interoperability with the NHS and Police supports a unified, large-scale emergency response, showcasing leadership in national resilience.
 4. Demonstrating Accountability: Direct procurement minimises unnecessary costs, ensuring resource efficiency and reinforcing public trust in the Service’s commitment to protection and fiscal responsibility.
16. This approach embodies the Service’s commitment to serve, protect, and keep the community safe.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CBRN	C hemical B iological R adiological N uclear
NCBRNC	N ational C hemical B iological R adiological N uclear C entre
FRS	F ire and R escue S ervice
HSG	H omeland S ecurity G roup
MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice
SI	S ervice I nstruction

This page is intentionally left blank