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To: All Members of the Community Safety and Protection Committee

**R. Groves
Monitoring Officer**

Tel: 0151 296 4000
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Our ref: MG/RG

Date: 5 August 2026

Dear All,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE** to be held at **13:00hrs** on **THURSDAY 13TH AUGUST 2026** in the Liverpool Suite at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

The meeting will be available to watch via YouTube on the following link:

https://youtube.com/live/X_1JfARhupU?feature=share

Yours faithfully,

JP – M Griffiths

Monitoring Officer

Encl.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

13 AUGUST 2026

AGENDA

Members

Councillor Janet Grace (Chair)
Councillor Les Byrom
Councillor Lena McCormick
Councillor Tony Murphy
Councillor Chris Page
Councillor Aimee Wright
Councillor Sam Gorst
Councillor Kieran Murphy
Councillor Matt Kent

1. Apologies

To consider any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To consider declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 4)

To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 30th April 2026.

4. ND2 Procurement: Wildfire Unimogs (Pages 5 - 8)

To consider the report relating to ND2 Procurement: Wildfire Unimogs (CFO/06/2627).

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

30 APRIL 2026

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors** Jan Grace (Chair), Edna Finneran, Mike Sullivan, Lynne Thompson, Kieran Murphy, Les Byrom and Lynn O'Keeffe.

Also present:	Chief Fire Officer	Nick Searle
	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Ged Sheridan
	Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
	Monitoring Officer	Ria Groves

20. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Page, Doreen Knight, Jeanette Banks (Councillors Byrom and Lynn O'Keeffe attended as alternates) and Councillor Lesley Rennie.

21. Declarations of Interest

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

22. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th February 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

23. Urgent Business Approved by Chair and Chief Fire Officer

Members were advised that urgent business in accordance with the Standing Order 17 in the constitution, had been undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.

Members noted the award of a contract for 6 pods for a value of £355,100, required completion prior to the next committee meeting that could be convened due to the need for the assets to be available in time for the wildfire period, therefore the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Authority approved the contract to Lloyd Limited.

24. People Plan Update 2024-27

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle, presented the report, which updated Members on progress against the actions within the People Plan 2024–2027. Members

were advised that the Fire and Rescue National Framework required each Authority to maintain a people strategy, and that this requirement was discharged through the Authority's People Plan covering the period June 2024 to June 2027.

It was noted that, as referenced in paragraph 10 of the report, the Plan was built upon five linked themes: attracting and retaining the best people; developing exceptional people and leaders; promoting a holistic approach to health and wellbeing; delivering sector-leading organisational performance; and embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion within a strong, positive culture. The Plan contained 26 actions across these themes, supported by 63 sub-actions.

Members were directed to paragraph 16, which set out the percentage of completion of actions. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that all actions remained on course for completion within the lifecycle of the Plan, by June 2027.

Councillor Sullivan commended the report, stating that it was an excellent and highly professional piece of work, and noted that the Authority remained on course in delivering the People Plan. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated that progress was attributable to the commitment of the teams involved and confirmed that all activity remained on track. He stated that he was confident that the Authority was moving in the right direction.

Councillor Byrom thanked staff and expressed appreciation for their work, noting that significant praise was due. It was highlighted that this was the last formal diarised meeting of the municipal year and Councillor Byrom placed on record his thanks to staff for their continued contribution, including those contributing at a national level.

Chair, Councillor Jan Grace, queried if the Chief Fire Officer could expand on the Authority's approach to reverse mentoring, which was contained within page 45 of the agenda. The Chief Fire Officer explained that reverse mentoring had traditionally paired senior leaders with colleagues at different levels within the organisation to gain insight into their experiences, perspectives, and ways of thinking. He stated that the approach had been personally invaluable, and he continued to support this approach across the Service.

Councillor Byrom noted that the previous internal Associate Head of Culture and Transformation lead, who had undertaken similar work within the NHS, also reversed mentored a lot of staff within the Authority. It was reiterated that reverse mentoring was highly beneficial across wide range of staff groups.

RESOLVED that the positive progress made against the actions outlined within the plan be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 13th August 2026

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY & PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	13 AUGUST 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/06/2627
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON	REPORT AUTHOR:	ND2 PROGRAMME LEAD, PAUL HITCHEN
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, GED SHERIDAN, HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD, CATEGORY MANAGER, MARTIN ROBERTS, HEAD OF FINANCE, JAMES CAMPBELL, MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES WILDFIRE CAPABILITY TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ND2 PROCUREMENT: WILDFIRE UNIMOGS		
APPENDICES:	NONE		

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval to procure four specialist Unimog wildfire response vehicles at a cost of £656,000 as part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded National Resilience Wildfire Pilot. The proposal replaces the previously intended lease arrangements for the remaining vehicles and will deliver an estimated saving of £115,793 whilst maintaining operational capability and ensuring the effective use of public funds.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report;
 - b) approve the procurement of four Unimog wildfire response vehicles at a total cost of £656,000; and
 - c) note the estimated saving of approximately £115,793 compared with the lease option.

Introduction and Background

3. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, as Lead Authority for National Resilience on behalf of MHCLG, has supported the delivery of a specialist wildfire response pilot as part of the New Dimensions 2 (ND2) Programme.

4. The pilot, originally established to take place over one wildfire season, includes six Isuzu 4x4 vehicles and six specialist Unimog vehicles fitted with bespoke wildfire pods capable of transporting firefighting equipment and water.
5. Members will recall that urgency powers were previously used to approve the lease of six Unimogs and procurement of associated equipment pods to meet delivery timescales ahead of the wildfire season.
6. Due to significant wildfire activity and the need to support a future national business case, MHCLG has agreed to extend the pilot for up to a further two years and requested a review of value-for-money options for the vehicle fleet.
7. Six Isuzu vehicles are already in service under lease arrangements and six Unimogs are due to enter operational use following completion of the blue light conversion and specialist pods.
8. Review of the extended pilot identified that, whilst leasing was appropriate for rapid mobilisation, purchasing the remaining four Unimogs represents the most cost effective solution.
9. At the time of review, only two lease agreements had been completed for the Unimogs, enabling the procurement strategy for the remaining four vehicles to be changed.
10. The purchase cost is £164,000 per vehicle (£656,000 total) and will deliver an estimated £115,793 saving compared with continuing the lease arrangement. Funding is provided in full by MHCLG.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement. The specification ensures it meets UK road safety regulations. The design and selection ensures safe emergency response, and subsequent operation in wildfire environments, with safety across all personnel roles regardless of background, identity or physical characteristics.

Staff Implications

12. All staff will be required to complete familiarisation training in the operational use but is not envisaged to be extensive.

Legal Implications

13. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Procurement Department have identified the route to market via the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) framework agreement for the purchase of HGV, Specialist Vehicles and Waste Supplies, NEPO224.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 14. Funding for the Unimogs is provided by MHCLG as part of the ND2 programme, enhancing the current capabilities.
- 15. The proposal reduces overall expenditure by approximately £115,793 compared with leasing and represents the most economically advantageous option following extension of the pilot.
- 16. Maintenance of the vehicles will be managed via a separate contract under Long Term Capability Management, with separate funding secured via MHCLG.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

- 17. Risk management for the procurement and implementation is monitored and addressed by the Wildfire Pilot Project. Standard operating procedures will be developed along with training, and risk assessments completed, prior to mobilisation and operational deployment.
- 18. Delays in procurement could impact operational readiness during periods of increased wildfire activity.

Environmental Implications

- 19. The procurement aligns with sustainability goals by procuring new fit for purpose specialist vehicles designed for modern fuel efficiency and to Euro VI emissions standards.
- 20. The vehicles support the deployment of specialist wildfire resources, helping Fire and Rescue Services respond effectively to incidents that can have significant environmental impacts.

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.*

- 21. The recommendation supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision and purpose by strengthening national wildfire resilience, supports operational readiness and delivers demonstrable value for money through reduced expenditure and improved use of public funds.

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