

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 MAY 2021	REPORT NUMBER:	CFO/023/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	CFO PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	RIA GROVES	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	MICHELLE KIRK, DEB APPLETON HYWYN PRITCHARD, ANTHONY HOLLAND, RIA GROVES		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT	
	APPENDIX B:	WILKINSON COWAN FEE PROPOSAL	

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members' of the progress made in acquiring an accessibility auditor to complete an audit of all Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service properties.

Recommendation

2. That Members';
 - a. Note the specification for the audit.
 - b. Note that Officers have awarded the contract for services of an accessibility audit to Wilkinson Cowan Partnership for a Total sum of £14,150

Introduction and Background

3. Accessibility Audits offer Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority ('the Authority') valuable insight and guidance on the current condition and accessibility of its buildings for both staff and members of the public. Information from the previous Accessibility Audit is regularly used in the planning of future building works and station developments and the Authority is conscious of the value of commissioning a new audit to ensure that any additional best practice is factored into this work. On this basis it was determined that an Accessibility Audit of the current property profile of the Authority be undertaken.
4. A number of meetings took place throughout December, January and February to develop the specification document attached in 'Appendix A'. The specification takes on board both feedback received from the Staff Network chairs along with legislative requirements and has been developed between Estates and the Equality and Diversity Advisor.

5. Further to initial enquires as to estimated costs for the audit a route to market was discussed with the Head of Procurement. As no suitable frameworks were found to be available for the specialist nature of the Audit the decision was therefore taken to use suppliers registered only on the National Register of Access Consultants.
6. 73 Auditors are available on the register to carry out audits in the North West, to narrow the suppliers down to a manageable level and to ensure the fastest service response times from the supplier, only suppliers in the Merseyside postcode area were invited to quote.
7. The specification, Request for Quotation and standard purchase order terms and conditions were sent to five suppliers on the 19th March with a deadline for a return no later than 17:00 on the 2nd April.
8. Two suppliers pulled out due to capacity issues and not being able to meet our time line for the audits. One supplier failed to return a quotation.
9. Therefore, two quotations were received with

Wilkinson Cowan Partnership offering the best value at **£14,150.00 plus VAT** and includes all disbursements. This equates to **£442.19 per site**.
10. The audits are due to commence in May 2021 with a report being produced for consideration of any findings and any impact on future building works and station plans.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. Undertaking a new Accessibility Audit will be a significant benefit for MFRA. The Audit will ensure that MFRA remain compliant with the current provisions of the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and Building Regulations in relation to accessibility and inclusion.

Staff Implications

12. The impact of the access/cultural audit work will be positive on staff across the Service as buildings and stations will be upgraded to make them more accessible and inclusive.

Legal Implications

13. The services provided by the proposed supplier will be procured through an appropriate contract.
14. Undertaking an Accessibility Audit of the Authority's premises will ensure the Authority remains compliant with its legal duties within the relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. A £20k budget provision was approved by the Authority in the 2021/22 Medium Term Financial Plan for the accessibility audits

16. Until the detailed Accessibility Audit report is produced it is assumed that any remedial works will be contained within the existing estates capital budget provisions.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

17. The Audit will identify any potential improvements that can be made in regard to the Equality Act 2010, a risk register will be produced from the findings of the Audits and reported back to the Resources Board.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

18. The Audit will help us to continually embed ED&I in the organisation and improve the physical environment for both MFRA staff and visitors.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.