

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 DECEMBER 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/068/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM OAKFORD	REPORT AUTHOR:	AM OAKFORD
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GM THOMAS, HYWYN PRITCHARD – PROCUREMENT, SIMON PURCELL – FINANCE, CAROLINE BERRY – LEGAL		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY OF SMOKE ALARMS– REVISED FRAMEWORK		

APPENDICES:

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members that the most recent contract for the procurement and supply of smoke alarms has expired and to advise that a new contract will be awarded to Fire Blitz.
2. The value of the contract is likely to exceed £250,000 during its term and requires Authority approval.

Recommendation

3. To request that Members approve the award of a call-off contract for the next 4 years for the supply of smoke alarms with Fire Blitz.

Introduction and Background

4. The procurement and supply arrangements of domestic smoke alarms for installation by MFRS has now expired. It was based upon a framework agreement, awarded by West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) to Sprue Safety who trade under the name Fire Angel.
5. A successor arrangement for Smoke Alarms and Associated Products was undertaken by WMFS and Fire Blitz was selected as the preferred provider of smoke alarms the framework agreement is available for the award of call-off contracts between 1st June 2021 and the 31st May 2025.
6. As the new contract would mean a change of contractor, additional due diligence beyond that conducted by WMFS, has been undertaken by MFRS officers. To this end, Officers have been in contact with a number of FRS's including Northern Ireland, Essex and Mid and West Wales. The services provided to other FRSs by Fire Blitz were highly satisfactory and support this approach.

7. Reliability and performance issues for the new product, as reported by other FRSs, were stated as being considerably fewer, thus leading to fewer repeat visits by officers (for remedial visits), by providing a more reliable product and subsequently improving efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Due to critical supply chain challenges with the current MFRS smoke alarm supplier and also to enable a trial of the Fire Blitz product officers procured over 6000 units from Fire Blitz in advance of seeking Members' support for committing to a 4 year contract.
9. The 6,000 Fire Blitz units have been utilised across the service from w/c 20th September 2021 and supporting guidance has been prepared and issued for all staff involved in prevention activity.
10. Unit reliability continues to be monitored for a period of three months, enabling officers to understand performance of the unit. This will inform the return/replacement element, which will be provide assurance on the after sales element of the new contract.
11. Due to the number of anticipated Home Fire Safety Checks and Safe and Well visits to be conducted during the term of the framework the cost in the future may exceed £250,000. Therefore, Members are asked to approve a 4 year call off agreement in the event the costs exceed £250,000.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The contract also has provision for smoke alarms for households that have hearing impaired or visually impaired residents.

Staff Implications

13. A more reliable product means that fewer returns need follow up action by staff e.g. less calls and complaints to FSD. There have been no reported issues to date.

Legal Implications

14. The framework agreement has been concluded by WMFS.
15. The previous contract also allows for FRS's to maintain its liabilities and warranties; if a Fire Angel smoke detector becomes defective we are still able to have this replaced in line with the warranty period.
16. Fire Blitz have provided Product Liability of £5 million, this meets the Authorities expectations and is in excess of the £1 million stated in the framework.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

17. The smoke alarms sourced through the new framework are more competitively priced, the new arrangement will generate financial savings circa £0.80 per unit.

18. MFRS through its IRMP conducts 50,000 Home Fire Safety Checks and 10,000 Safe and Well visits which combined requires the installation of approximately 35,000 smoke alarm units per annum (ratio 0.6 new units per visit).
19. It is envisaged that through this new arrangement MFRS could save approx. £28,000 per annum.
20. Based upon previous unit sales, the overall value of this contract from 2021/22 to May 2025 is likely to exceed £500,000. The Authority periodically receives grants from Local Authorities and Housing Providers to offset some of these costs. Details of which are reported through the Prevention Board.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

21. It is anticipated that improved reliability of product will require less safe disposal of alarms therefore minimising the impact on the environment.

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.*

22. A direct contribution to our mission is to install such devices in the homes of Merseyside residents who are at the highest risk of fire.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority is the physical and legal entity. When writing reports MFRA is the “object”.
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice is the service provided by MFRA. When writing reports MFRS is the “action”
WMFS	West Midlands Fire Service