

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	27 OCTOBER 2022	REPORT NO:	CFO/047/22
PRESENTING OFFICER	DCFO NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	PAUL MURPHY AREA MANAGER IAN CUMMINS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT	REPORT AUTHOR:	HYWYN PRITCHARD
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	PAUL HITCHIN		
TITLE OF REPORT:	AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE DESIGN AND SUPPLY OF ELS VEHICLES		

APPENDICES:	
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Purpose of Report

1. As the Home Office (HO) national resilience lead the Service has worked with HO and other FRA colleagues to source vans to provide Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) at incidents. Officers wish to award a contract for the purchase of 6 vehicles at a cost of £728,901.84, with Wilker UK Limited. As the contract exceeds £250,000, Standing Orders require that Members must approve the contract.
2. All costs associated with the contract are funded by the HO.
3. In advance of signing the contract officers may wish to increase the order for an additional ELS van, £121,483.64, and, may also want to request additional non-material changes to the current specification (up to 5% of the contract value). Therefore, Members are requested to approve these contract amendments, if they are required.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the award of a contract to Wilker UK Limited, for the design and supply of a fleet of 6 vans for the purposes of Enhanced Logistics Support was approved by the Chair, Vice Chair and Party Group Leaders under Standing Order 17.2 of the constitution following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer , and
 - b) note, if necessary, that the contract can be amended to include an additional vehicle and/or increased specification, and

- c) note all costs associated with the contract will be funded by the Home Office.

Introduction and Background

5. The Service acts on behalf of the Home Office (HO) as the national resilience lead authority and as part of that role the Service procures national resilience assets. The Service has worked with HO and other FRA colleagues to source vans to provide Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) at incidents. This is a new vehicle requirement to support the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National Resilience Enhanced Logistics Support (ELS) Capability with a fleet of 6 ELS vehicles.
6. These vehicles will be similar in design to existing Fire and Rescue Service Incident Command Units already used across England and Wales. They will be based at 6 strategic locations and may be hosted/housed either inside a fire appliance bay or outside (near to an existing fire appliance bay). When in operation the vehicle will be driven on the public highway and sited on hard standing ground within a Strategic Holding Area. However there may be some instances where it may be driven and sited on uneven compacted ground (forestry/moorland areas).
7. The vehicles will serve NFCC National Resilience for its intended purpose of transporting specialist equipment to deliver ELS. Additionally the vehicles may be deployed to deliver ELS training throughout the UK.
8. As the existing ELS Vehicles are assets that are not currently serviced under the provisions of the Long Term Capability Management (LTCM) their procurement lies outside this contracting arrangement. However it is envisaged that once in service the vehicles will be added to the LTCM maintenance schedule.
9. Following the recent successive lockdowns in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle deliveries have been adversely affected. Primarily, the delays have been caused by shortages of integrated circuits (silicon chips) used in vehicle manufacture. The war in Ukraine has also made matters worse in terms of supply chains e.g. wiring looms, rubber.
10. To mitigate the risk of long lead times it was imperative to have orders placed with a suitable supplier at the earliest opportunity.
11. Initial discussions took place in March 2022 between the group as represented by HO, FRA colleagues and MFRS. It was decided that a suitable route to market would be by framework agreement as this would reduce both timescales and risk in terms of contracting.
12. The group as represented by HO, FRA colleagues and MFRS agreed that one supplier was required to deliver a fully modified vehicle, as opposed to procuring vehicles from one supplier and having them modified by another. By having only one party responsible for the vehicle selection and its modification, the risk of any

disputes arising between vehicle supplier and vehicle converter have been greatly reduced.

13. The market approach taken was to use Crown Commercial Services' (CCS) Vehicle Conversions framework agreement (RM3158), having also considered their Vehicles framework (RM6060) as well as the Devon and Somerset framework for vehicles. The group was comfortable that suppliers named on the Vehicle Conversions framework had suitable experience in blue light applications.
14. The specification for the converted vehicle was worked up and completed during the first quarter (FY 2022/23). It was written to allow prospective suppliers to select the brand of vehicle for conversion within certain parameters. At the same time tender documents were completed and the electronic version prepared – project reference Design and Supply of Enhanced Logistics Support Vehicles (MFRS 2223-03)
15. Tenders were invited on the 4th of June and suppliers' clarification questions were answered on the 3rd of August. 5 bidders responded by the deadline the 16th of August.
16. Tenders were circulated to the Evaluation Panel of the 17th of August together with a scoring sheet. Individual scores were returned by the 2nd of September. The consensus scoring meeting was held on the 7th when it was decided to conduct a clarification meeting on the 13th.
17. Following the clarification meeting the Evaluation Panel agreed that highest scoring bidder's scores were correct and did not need adjustment. Also the Evaluation Panel was content to confer preferred bidder status to Wilker UK Limited as the highest scoring bidder.
18. Evaluation and feedback notices were sent to all unsuccessful bidding organisations on the 14th with a standstill period close of the 26th of September at the earliest. The highest scoring bidder was advised of its preferred bidder status and also that no contract would be awarded without MFRA's approval.
19. The preferred bidder acknowledged the intention to award notice on the 15th which was received very positively. Subject to contract vehicle deliveries are expected during the week commencing 30th October 2023.
20. Due to necessary changes in the timescale of the next Authority meeting and time constraints to enter into the contract in respect of the costs and the time for the vehicles to be built and delivered due to external market factors the award of the contract was urgent and following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer was therefore brought to the Chair of the Authority under provision of standing order 17.2 of the Authority. The award of the contract was agreed by the Chair of the Authority along with the Vice Chair and Party Group Leaders however, this report is to present the full details to Members of the Authority and the decision to award the contract.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with the purchase of vehicles. .

Staff Implications

22. The Specification required that taller employees could work comfortably in the vehicle.
23. Training has also been included for operational and maintenance staff within the tender.

Legal Implications

24. The route to market is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
25. A call-off contract based on the vehicle conversions framework agreement (RM3814) will be signed with the supplier subject to Authority approval.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

26. The price for the 6 vehicles as quoted will be £728,901.84 (excluding VAT, road fund license and first registration fee).
27. Note that if 7 vans are required the contract price would increase to £850,385.48. Furthermore a Members are asked to agree to a provision of up to 5% of the contract value to cover potential minor additions to the specification (if necessary).
28. Funds for this procurement have already been allocated by Home Office National Resilience purposes.
29. Having a fleet of new vehicles on order in 2022 will ensure that from approximately November 2023 specialist vehicles will be available to deliver ELS.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

30. The tender includes vehicle inspection and testing by a third party provider that will generate a test report.

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.*

31. By replacing the fleet with up to date vehicles a more reliable and responsive service can be delivered that will better protect communities from incidents as part of national resilience

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is the physical and legal entity. When writing reports MFRA is the “object”.
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is the service provided by MFRA. When writing reports MFRS is the “action”
CCS	Crown Commercial Services
ELS	Enhanced Logistics Support
LTCM	Long Term Capability Management