

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>31 JANUARY 2023</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/56/22</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>AM BEN RYDER</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MIKE CUMMINS</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>DAVE SEASMAN &amp; SM ADAM MAXWELL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>MARINE RESCUE UNIT FLEET REFRESH</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	
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## **Purpose of Report**

1. To set out the options for a fleet refresh for the Marine Rescue Unit (MRU) and seek the approval of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority') for the option of purchasing 2 x Atlantic 85 (A85) Inshore Lifeboats from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) at a cost of £300k inclusive of the cost of 2 additional engines.

## **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members;
  - a) Approve the purchase of 2 x Atlantic 85 Inshore Lifeboats from the RNLI, including 2 additional engines at a cost of £300k; and
  - b) Note the fleet options and projected costs to ensure a planned fleet life of 10-years for the use of the A85 type boat.

## **Introduction and Background**

### Fleet Configuration

3. For operational continuity and resilience purposes the MRU operates a fleet of 2 Rescue Boat Code (RBC) compliant boats. The fleet was last refreshed in 2018 with 2 x retired Atlantic 75 boats procured from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI).
4. The estimated life of the A75 fleet when purchased by the Authority in 2018 was between 3 and 5 years. As the RNLI was phasing out the remaining A75's from their fleet and replacing them with the larger and more capable Atlantic 85 (A85) boat they were clear that beyond 2021 the RNLI would be unable to support, the A75 boats.

5. The MRU fleet of 2 x A75 boats has now reached the end of their effective life. The RNLI is no longer in a position to support any on-going maintenance, supply spares/new engines or re-fit of the MRU A75 fleet as they have retired all their A75 boats and replaced them with the upgraded A85 boat. The RNLI no longer retain any capacity to support the A75 boat.
6. The RNLI has offered the Service the option to purchase 2 x retired A85 boats at a cost of £130k per boat. These boats will be available for purchase in February 2023 following inspection/survey in January 2023. These boats are the successor to the A75 boat
7. The A85 boats would be provided in an 'as new' condition with new immersion proofed outboard engines fitted. Both vessels underwent a complete RNLI refit within the past 2-years.
8. As part of the package the Service would have the option of purchasing 2 new engines at the point of purchase of the 2 x A85 boats at cost of £40k. Exercising this option will ensure fleet resilience and minimise the potential for boat unavailability under the 2-boat response model operated by the MRU.

#### Criteria Fleet Refresh

9. Service managers have determined a selection criteria for a fleet refresh as set out below:
  - a) Only vessels which are Rescue Boat Code (RBC) compliant or capable of achieving compliance will be considered. Any fleet replacement options must be capable of achieving Rescue Boat Code compliance. The MRU holds 'Declared Facility' status with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). A declared facility means a facility that has been designated as being available for civilian search and rescue (SAR) under the direction of HM Coastguard according to a specific criteria. Under the local MoU between the Authority and the MCA compliance with the Rescue Boat Code is a key part of this criteria.
  - b) Only retired vessels will be considered due to cost implications, but they must in so far as is practicable and reasonable meet an 'as new' standard.
  - c) Only vessels with immersion proofed outboard engines and a self-righting capability will be considered.
  - d) The supplier/manufacture must offer a long term support package inclusive of spares and technical support and provide confirmation that they will be able to provide this support for a minimum period of 10-years
  - e) The supplier/manufacture must be able to provide a full history of the vessel and its maintenance, engine replacement and re-fit history.

- f) The supplier/manufacturer must be able to provide a full re-fit option for the vessel and provide confirmation that they will be able to provide this option for a minimum of 10-years from the point of purchase
- g) The vessels must support interoperability options with the RNLI at New Brighton which is the nearest RNLI station to the MRU.
- h) Only vessels which have a proven record in marine Search and Rescue operations will be considered.

#### A85 – The Preferred Option

- 10. Following a rigorous analysis, Service managers have concluded that, the only option for fleet refreshment that meets all the criteria set out in paragraphs 9 is the offer tabled by the RNLI for the purchase of 2 x retired A85 boats.
- 11. Up until this point the RNLI have not released any A85 boats to other organisations in the UK. Although they have been approached by other bodies providing a maritime SAR capability including other UK FRS they have expressed a preference at this point to partner only with MFRS.
- 12. The RNLI operate a fleet of over 100 A85 boats with a demonstrable and exemplary record in marine SAR in UK inshore waters. They will continue to build this class of boat up until at least 2030 and will continue to support them well into the 2040's.
- 13. The cost of a new A85 would be in the order of £350k to £400k, although the lead in and build period is estimated by the RNLI to be in the order of 4-years. For comparison the cost of 2 x retired A85's would be £260k whilst the cost of 2 x new A85's would be in the order of £700k to £800k

#### A85 – Fleet Life

- 14. The projected fleet life of the 2 A85 boats recommended for purchase in 2023 is a minimum of 5-years up to 2028. The options at this point would be to;
  - a) replace the boats with 2 new A85 boats , or
  - b) commission a full re-fit of the boats purchased in 2023.

Either of these options would then extend the fleet life for the A85 type boat to 10-years from 2023 up to 2033.

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### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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15. This report does not require an EIA.

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### **Staff Implications**

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16. The A85 boats offer a significant upgrade on the A75's currently in service and will provide crews with a more capable rescue vessel.
17. Some familiarisation training will be required for crews particularly in relation to new navigation and communications equipment. Arrangements will be put in place with the RNLI to facilitate this.
18. The A75's will remain in Service until all staff have been deemed competent to ride the new A85 boats.

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### **Legal Implications**

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19. The procurement of the 2 Atlantic 85 boats is subject to the relevant legislative requirements and the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and this proposal by a single tender meets those requirements. . .

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### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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20. The cost of purchasing the 2 new A85 boats in 2023 including 2 spare engines is £300k and this will secure a projected fleet life of 5-years. This will met from the current capital programme for the MRU.
21. Further capital expenditure of between £150k and £300k will be required in 2028 to extend fleet life by a further 5-years up to 2033 for the A85 type boat. This will require a refresh of the MRU capital programme for 2028.
22. Purchasing retired but 'as new' status boats is much more cost effective option than purchasing new vessels. A new A85 boat would cost £350k and still be subject to the same re-fit regime (including costs) as a retired A85 boat.
23. Maintenance costs for 2 x A85 boats are anticipated as being comparable as those for 2 x A75's currently in service and will be contained within existing budgets.

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### **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

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24. Only vessels which meet the Rescue Boat Code will be considered for acquisition in order to maintain the highest possible standards of safety for MRU crews and those who are in receipt of assistance

25. Petrol outboard engines are the only viable power options for boats meeting the selection criteria established by the Service.

**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.*

26. The provision of a water borne rescue capability on the Mersey ensures that the Authority can respond to distress and safety events on the Mersey and to minimise the risk of loss of life and injury and damage to property.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NONE**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>MRU</b>	Marine Rescue Unit
<b>MCA</b>	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
<b>RNLI</b>	Royal National Lifeboat Institute
<b>A85</b>	RNLI Atlantic 85 Boat
<b>A75</b>	RNLI Atlantic 75 Boat
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>OPS</b>	Operations
<b>SAR</b>	Search & Rescue