

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	18 MAY 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/015/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	DCFO NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM PAUL MURPHY	REPORT AUTHOR:	HYWYN PRITCHARD
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	IAN CUMMINS – DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT TOM HIRONS, NEIL MILLWARD, CHRIS NOAKES,SLT		
TITLE OF REPORT:	DETECTION, IDENTIFICATION AND MONITORING EQUIPMENT		

APPENDICES:

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of a competitive procurement process to renew the equipment used to detect, identify and monitor hazardous materials (DIM) by the National Resilience teams.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members:
 - a) approve the creation of a framework agreement and subsequent call off contracts for the purposes of national resilience;
 - b) approve Lot 1 and Lot 5 (as outlined in paragraph 12) to Hazmat LINK Ltd
 - c) approve Lot 2, 6, and 7 (as outlined in paragraph 12) to Southern Scientific Limited
 - d) approve Lot 3 (as outlined in paragraph 12) to CBRNeregetics Limited
 - e) approve Lot 4 (as outlined in paragraph 12) to Metrohm UK
 - f) approve Lot 9 (as outlined in paragraph 12) to Amatek

Introduction and Background

3. This procurement is part of the New Dimensions 2 asset refresh programme which is part of the responsibilities taken on by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority') as Lead Authority for the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT).
4. The existing equipment used to detect, identify and monitor hazardous materials (DIM) by the National Resilience teams required replacing and in 2021 discussions took place about the procurement strategy to be adopted. Representatives from the Home Office, National Resilience lead officers, and the

Authority's Procurement Team formed the DIM Working Group to provide the relevant project governance, and report on progress to the National Resilience Board.

5. As Lead Authority for National Resilience, the Service wanted to establish a framework agreement for the purchase of Detection, Identification and Monitoring equipment for the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) capability in order to complete the asset refresh programme. The equipment is intended for use when National Resilience teams respond to incidents that could involve the release of chemical, biological or radiological substances. There are some 18 such teams to be re-equipped with new devices as well as a possible requirement for dedicated devices for training. The framework agreement would also be made available to the other 'Blue Light Services'.
6. The suite of devices required will utilise a variety of technologies to allow the greatest number of 'target materials' to be detected and identified. Having a variety of technologies will allow potential complementary identification of the target materials and so reduce gaps in capability.
7. The competitive exercise has been divided into 10 discrete 'lots', based on the likely individual technologies.

Lot 1	Device to identify solid and liquid chemical materials, using infra-red spectroscopy.
Lot 2	Device to identify gas and vapour chemical materials, using mass spectroscopy.
Lot 3	Device to identify gas and vapour chemical materials, using flame photometry.
Lot 4	Device to identify solid and liquid chemical materials, using Raman spectroscopy
Lot 5	Device to identify biological materials, using polymerase chain reaction (PCR)
Lot 6	Device to detect emitted gamma and neutron radiation
Lot 7	Device to detect emitted alpha radiation
Lot 8	Device to detect emitted beta radiation
Lot 9	Device to identify gamma emitting radiological isotopes
Lot 10	Device to identify solid, liquid, gas or vapour chemical materials using any other innovative technology not listed in any other lot

8. 35 suppliers viewed the opportunity of which 5 subsequently opted out, 18 did not respond and 12 bidders submitted tenders by the 1pm deadline on the 5th of October. Once the tender deadline had passed the desktop evaluation started. The first step was to review the Standard Selection Questionnaire which all 12 bidders passed. The next stage was for all bidders to have passed the pass or fail criteria for each type of device being evaluated. All devices submitted in each lot passed the criteria.

9. The scored elements for each lot were then evaluated according to Price (40%), Technical Elements (45%) and Assessment Questions (10%) before making an informed decision about which devices to progress to User Trials (5%).
10. The Evaluation Panel decided to take more than the minimum possible of devices through to User Trials. This decision mitigated the risk of having only a single device evaluated that was found to be not fit for purpose at the User Trial. Most of the User Trials were held between the end of November and mid-December, with one conducted in January. On completion of the User Trials the score was added to the other award criteria's scores to arrive at the final score.
11. The DIM Working Group received regular reports on the progress of securing replacement DIM assets. Following the conclusion of the procurement process a report was presented to the DIM Working Group describing the progress made since the publication of the contract notice until the completion of user trials and the following recommendations to award the relevant Lots to the winning bidders are:

LOT 1	Hazmat LINK Ltd
LOT 2	Southern Scientific Limited
LOT 3	CBRNeregetics Limited
LOT 4	Metrohm UK
LOT 5	Hazmat LINK Ltd
LOT 6	Southern Scientific Limited
LOT 7	Southern Scientific Limited
LOT 8	Combined with Lot 7
LOT 9	Amatek
LOT 10	No Award at this time (under review)

12. Members should be aware that Lot 8 was combined with Lot 7 as the same devices were tendered. Therefore, only a single Lot needed to be awarded and this was awarded under Lot 7.
13. Lot 10 is currently under review and therefore there is no recommendation to award under Lot 10 at this time until the review has concluded.
14. Under the framework agreement as Lead Authority the Authority would procure the DIM equipment on behalf of the national resilience teams with an estimated total cost of £9 million. This procurement is on behalf of the Home Office and all expenditure will be funded by the Home Office however, as the anticipated spend will exceed £250,000 the Authority's standing orders require Members' approval.
15. If the report's recommendations are approved by Members it is envisaged that 4 year framework agreements for the required DIM equipment can be available from June.

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16. A Technical Working Group was established to ensure both technical and user needs could be met from the preferred suppliers. Participants at user trials did comprise of both male female National Resilience officers.

Staff Implications

17. As some of the devices will be new to DIM capability officers all bidders were asked to provide pricing for suitable training packages within their tenders that formed part of the price evaluation.
18. Additionally, the Scientific Training Services has been recently tendered which referred to training participants to use new devices. The term of the new contract has been kept deliberately short so that a longer-term contract can be awarded when all new devices have been integrated within the DIM capability.

Legal Implications

19. The route to market is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015

Financial Implications & Value for Money

20. Funds for this procurement have already been allocated by Home Office for National Resilience purposes.
21. Value for money has been achieved by undertraining a rigorous competitive exercise following an openly advertised process that included pre-market engagement.
22. The competitive exercise has been supported by one of the Authority's Procurement Apprentices to gain valuable experience that can be drawn upon to help with securing a procurement qualification.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

23. In order to progress in the competitive process all bidders had to complete and pass a selection questionnaire, including insurance requirements as well a technically demanding specification.
24. Decision making during the process was governed by groups and boards to identify and mitigate risks.
25. A substantial number of devices, including all that were likely to be contracted devices were checked at user trials to ensure their ease of operation.
26. The call-off contract has clauses that manage risk including provisions for Liability, Indemnity and Insurance, Health and Safety.

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.*

27. By replacing the DIM equipment with better, up to date devices a more reliable and responsive service can be delivered that will protect communities from incidents involving hazardous materials and from potentially more serious incidents such as the recent attack at Liverpool Women’s Hospital or even Salisbury-like incidents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority is the physical and legal entity.
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice is the service provided by MFRA.
DIM	D etection, I dentification and M onitoring
HO	H ome O ffice