

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	15 MAY 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/99/25
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, NATIONAL RESILIENCE PAUL MURPHY	REPORT AUTHOR:	NATIONAL RESILLIENCE, SUE TURNER
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HYWYN PRITCHARD – HEAD OF PROCUREMENT JOHN MCINTYRE – CATEGORY MANAGER FOR GOODS & SERVICES CHRIS NOAKES – DIM CAPABILITY ADVISOR NEIL MILLWARD – DIM CAPABILITY OFFICER STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT SERVICES CONTRACT		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members that the current Scientific Support Services contract delivered by Bureau Veritas has the potential to exceed the Authority financial threshold of £300,000. Therefore, Authority approval is required to enable the continued delivery of National resilience ('NR') Detection Identification and Monitoring ('DIM') training courses to ensure Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) continue to meet their NR Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members approve the contract amendment for the contract value to exceed £300,000 (estimated to be £322, 203.95) and allow the remainder of courses scheduled to be delivered by the supplier Bureau Veritas UK, between June 2025 and end of contract 6th August 2025.

Introduction and Background

3. With effect from 1st April 2017, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Authority') assumed responsibility for the management and coordination of the delivery of National Resilience (NR) Skills Acquisition Courses, on behalf of the Home Office (HO) until April 2025 when this responsibility transferred to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
4. NR training is delivered on a distributed basis, with the continued support of the Fire and Rescue Service sector via a sector led cost recovery model. A Training

Needs Analysis (TNA) process is carried out for each Fire and Rescue Service to determine the requirements for NR Skills Acquisition Courses to ensure KPIs are maintained, and crews remain fit for purpose, to enable a response to large scale emergencies.

5. The contract for the supply of the training required for National Resilience was awarded to Bureau Veritas after a competitive tender process in August 2023. The term of the contract is for two years with the contract terminating on the 6th August 2025.
6. The current two-year contract enables delivery of the two one-week initial courses (DIM1 and DIM2) and the scenario based two-day DIM3 course that all DIM Advisors must complete every two years.
7. The demand for course places is driven by changes in the FRSs that have DIM Advisors due to retirements, promotions, transfers and organisational changes, which can make it difficult to accurately forecast the number of courses needed. During the term of the contract the amount of training required has increased resulting in the proposed contract value exceeding £300,000. The continuance of the training provision is critical to ensure the requisite training has been provided and remains available to the sector for a national resilience response.
8. The overall cost for planned Scientific Support Services with Bureau Veritas delivered during the term of the contract (7th August 2023 – 6th August 2025) will be over the £300,000 threshold set by the Authority, totalling £322,203.95. (See breakdown in financial implications).
9. At the expiry of the current contract a new tender process will be conducted by the Procurement Department alongside the subject matter experts.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Staff Implications

11. FRSs have arranged alternative cover for personnel attending NR DIM Skills Acquisition Courses.
12. Instructors have allocated their time and commitment to support the delivery of courses.

Legal Implications

13. There is a legal obligation under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 on employers to have a duty of care for its employees which can include sufficient training of employees within their roles.
14. The procurement and contract management is compliant with Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contract Regulations (2015). The current contract was

awarded via a framework which allows for the contract value to increase under a contract amendment to the new proposed cost of £322,203.95.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. The current spend from 7th August 2023 – 31st May 2025 on the delivery of Scientific Support Services with Bureau Veritas, totals £284,754.47.
16. The forecasted cost for Scientific Support Services with Bureau Veritas delivered from 1st June – 6th August 2025 (expiry of the contract) totals £37,449.48.
17. Therefore, the proposed overall cost for planned Scientific Support Services with Bureau Veritas delivered between 7th August 2023 – 6th August 2025 totals £322,203.95.
18. Funding will be met through the existing NR budget.
19. The NR Training Team continues to monitor courses closely and due to the flexibility of the training model, any additional course requests will be considered throughout the year, to meet mid-year KPI shortfalls if the budget permits.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

20. There is a risk to FRSs and the Lead Authority in not being able to maintain KPIs in the relative capabilities required under National Resilience, by not having a fully competent crew to deliver a response to a serious, significant or catastrophic incident in England.

Environmental Implications

21. There are no direct implications arising from this 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.*

22. The training will support the DIM Capability Teams to be fully equipped, and in a state of readiness to enable a response to large scale emergencies.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
NR	National Resilience
FRS	Fire Rescue Services

KPI	Key Performance Indicator
HO	Home Office
MHCLG	Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government
TNA	Training Needs Analysis