MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**11 DECEMBER 2025**	**REPORT NO:**	**CFO/33/2526**
PRESENTING OFFICER	**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE**		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	**AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON**	**REPORT AUTHOR:**	**STATION MANAGER, JANET ROBINSON**
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	**HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD GROUP MANAGER, PAUL HITCHEN GROUP MANAGER, MARK BALDWIN USAR CAPABILITY OFFICERS, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)**		
TITLE OF REPORT:	**ND2 PROCUREMENT: USAR POWER TOOLS**		

APPENDICES:	**N/A**

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure the power tools and lighting equipment detailed within, as part of the New Dimensions 2 (ND2) Programme that supports National Resilience.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members:

   a) note the contents of the report; and

   b) approve the award of the contract to TW Engineering Co. Ltd for the purchase of the equipment listed below at a total cost of £717,487.81.

Introduction and Background

3. ND2 is a national capability uplift programme that supports National Resilience (NR). The programme is authorised and funded by UK Government via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) are the Lead Authority for NR. Part of the national capability provides assets for Urban Search & Rescue (USAR).

4. The original New Dimensions programme identified and delivered national assets which enhanced the Fire & Rescue response to a range of catastrophic incidents, including natural and deliberate events, and specifically included response to large scale structural collapse and serious transport incidents.

5. The USAR capability currently have a wide variety of power tools and lighting systems in use which are both 110v and/or hydraulic supplied by petrol generators or use batteries which are not compatible with any other equipment held. The assets are primarily used for breaching and breaking and shoring, but the lighting and power supply systems are used in all USAR environments.

6. Through analysis of the capability, and review of projected requirements to address risk, it has been identified that battery powered equipment provides a modernised enhancement with multiple benefits to both the user and the environment. The ability to move equipment quickly into a rescue environment, and operate with minimal to no set up, has distinct advantages. The complete set of equipment required includes but is not limited to grinders, hammers, saws and lighting.

7. The procurement of the battery powered equipment forms part of a range of solutions in the wider project of ND2 and will enhance the USAR response capability directly.

8. The equipment will be available on the USAR Modules, which are a demountable unit that can be carried to incidents in support of a USAR First Response Vehicle (FRV). The strategic deployment has been considered in relation to location availability around the country and to enhance National Resilience.

9. Several factors have been considered in the selection of the equipment. These include, but are not limited to:

    - Compatibility with equipment to be located on the USAR FRV – this removes the requirement for initial and maintenance of competence training in two different caches of equipment.

    - Compatibility of batteries across the range of equipment on the Modules and FRV. Current equipment utilises a wide variety of battery types and power sources.

    - Space saving factors which will aid the reduction of the number of USAR Modules in ND2 Phases 3 & 4. For example, to operate a demolition breaker a large hydraulic generator (petrol driven) and a length of hydraulic hose is required in addition to the breaker itself. The proposed new breaker only requires a battery.

    - The route to market utilised was the ESPO framework agreement for the Supply of Tools and Ironmongery. A further competition was held and preferred bidder identified pursuant to the conclusion of the exercise. The preferred bidder identified was TW Engineering Co. Ltd.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement. The equipment specifications ensure compliance with safety regulations. The design and selection of this equipment ensure safe operation in USAR environments, prioritising safety across all personnel roles regardless of background, identity, or physical characteristics.

Staff Implications

11. All staff will be required to complete a familiarisation course in the use of this equipment. This training will initially be held for USAR Instructors who will then cascade it down to all other USAR trained personnel in their teams. Training will include pre use checks, operational use and trouble shooting.

Legal Implications

12. The procurement procedure was compliant with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations as applicable. This ensures a fair and transparent route to market for all suppliers on the framework.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. Funding for the equipment is provided by MHCLG as part of the ND2 USAR project. This will enhance the current USAR Capability.

14. The procurement cost of the equipment listed above is £717,487.81.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

15. Risk management for the procurement and implementation is monitored and addressed by the ND2 Programme. Standard operating procedures will be developed and assured along with training, and risk assessments completed, prior to mobilisation and operational deployment.

16. Battery operated tools:

- Eliminate the risk of electric shock from damaged cables especially in wet or hazardous environments which are typical at USAR incidents
- Require no trailing cables, reducing the risk of trips and falls
- Are of more innovative designs than the current models in use and produce less hand arm vibration.
- Do not require generators to be used which emit fumes and noise

17. Battery packs can add to the weight of tools which can increase fatigue during use, however battery-operated tools are more manoeuvrable which can improve working posture.

Environmental Implications

18. The procurement aligns with sustainability goals by replacing existing equipment which is nearing end of life and no longer sustainable with more efficient equipment:

    - Environmental benefits include reduced carbon emissions. Battery operated tools do not require constant power. Generators do not need to be running constantly producing emissions.
    - Energy efficiency - modern lithium-ion batteries are highly efficient
    - Noise pollution is minimised as battery operated tools are usually quieter and generators are not needed

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.*

19. The recommendation supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision and purpose by allowing USAR crews to respond faster, more effectively, and contribute to the saving of lives. It ensures responder and public safety during complex rescues thereby reducing the risk of injury or fatality and improves resilience and readiness for major incidents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FRV	**F**irst **R**esponse **V**ehicle
MFRA	**M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **A**uthority
MFRS	**M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **S**ervice
MHCLG	**M**inistry of **H**ousing, **C**ommunities and **L**ocal **G**overnment
ND2	**N**ew **D**imensions **2** Programme
NR	**N**ational **R**esilience
USAR	**U**rban **S**earch **A**nd **R**escue.
ESPO	**E**astern **S**hire **P**urchasing **O**rganisation