

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 FEBRUARY 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/37/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON	REPORT AUTHOR:	AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD ND2 OFFICER PAUL HITCHEN USAR CAPABILITY TEAM, HVP CAPABILITY TEAM, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ND2 PROCUREMENT - PRIME MOVERS		

APPENDICES:	NONE
--------------------	-------------

Purpose of Report

- To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure 81 x Prime Mover vehicles, as part of the New Dimensions 2 (ND2) Programme that supports National Resilience.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that Members;
 - note the contents of the report; and
 - approve the award of the contract to eStar Truck and Van Limited for 81 Prime Mover vehicles, at a total cost of £13,365,000.

Introduction and Background

- 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) and High Volume Pump operations (HVP).
- The original New Dimension 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, serious transport incidents and extreme weather events.

5. The USAR and HVP Capabilities currently require the use of a Prime Mover vehicle to deploy a range of assets in response to an emergency event, the assets being contained in a modular format. These modules have different assets dependant on the incident type and have proved a very effective method of deploying assets to the scene of operations. The modular format allows the vehicle to be repurposed once the module has been deployed if required:



6. There are currently in excess of 180 Prime Movers within the national asset pool, and the vehicles are now approaching the end of their usable life. However, following a strategic review, and revision of the deployment methodology for both USAR and HVP, it is possible to reduce the national requirement to 81 Prime Movers.
7. The procurement of the 81 Prime Movers ensures the current and future planned solutions to manage National Resilience incidents can be maintained in response to the Government requirements, and the procurement forms part of a range of solutions in the wider project of ND2.
8. The strategic deployment has been considered in relation to location availability around the country and to enhance National Resilience Concept of Operations.
9. Various options were considered in the continuation of the modular approach, and the identification of other methods of equipment deployment were adopted, allowing a reduction in total fleet number of Prime Movers. However, the Prime Mover remains a very effective option that offers transferability across NR capabilities.
10. A framework for the procurement of Acquisition and Conversion of Heavy Goods and Specialist Vehicles was identified as a route to market which met the Authority's requirements. A competition was held under the framework with 9 bids received for the tender. A total of nine bids were received, and a full evaluation was undertaken with the outcome identifying the preferred bidder as eStar Truck and Van Limited.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement. The specification ensures it meets UK road safety regulations. The design and selection ensures safe emergency response, and subsequent operation in USAR and HVP environments, with safety across all personnel roles regardless of background, identity or physical characteristics.

Staff Implications

12. All staff will be required to complete familiarisation training in the operational use, but is not envisaged to be extensive, given its similarity to existing provision.

Legal Implications

13. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Procurement Department have identified the route to market via the North East Purchasing Organisations framework agreement for the Acquisition and Conversion of Heavy Goods and Specialist Vehicles (NEPO 224). This ensures a fair and transparent route to market for all suppliers on the framework.
14. The award of any contract would be compliant with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations (2015)

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. Funding for the Prime Movers is provided by MHCLG as part of the ND2 programme, enhancing the current USAR and HVP Capabilities.
16. The procurement of 81 Prime Movers at a total cost of £13,365,000.
17. Maintenance of the vehicles will be managed via a separate contract under Long Term Capability Management, with separate funding secured via MHCLG.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

18. 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.

Environmental Implications

19. The procurement aligns with sustainability goals by replacing old vehicles that are less well-developed for fuel efficiency, which have reached end of life and are no longer sustainable. The specification requires the vehicles to be Euro 6 compliant, which will deliver much lower NOx and particulate matter emissions, be compliant with Ultra Low Emission / Clean Air Zones, and have strong fuel economy.

20. In their tender responses, suppliers are required to demonstrate how their solutions contribute to a number of social value objectives, one of which is Environmental Sustainability, these objectives are subsequently scored with the results contributing to the suppliers overall tender result.

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.*

21. The recommendation supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision and purpose by allowing crews to respond more effectively and contribute to the saving of lives. It ensures responder and public safety in response to emergency events, by providing modern vehicles with fewer maintenance issues, thereby reducing the risk of injury or fatalities, and improves resilience and readiness for major incidents.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
ND2	New Dimensions 2 Programme
NR	National Resilience
USAR	Urban Search And Rescue
HVP	High Volume Pump