

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	BUDGET AUTHORITY		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/43/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHOR:	APPRENTICESHIP MANAGER, ASHLEY ROBERTS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD, WORKFORCE PLANNING AND OD MANAGER, JOHN PRICE, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES, MIKE PILKINGTON, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF PERSONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING SERVICES		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: EIA
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and to seek authorisation to procure personal and leadership development training services.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report; and
 - b) approve the award of a contract for the supply of personal and leadership development training services to Brathay Trust Ltd for a duration of 4 years with an option to extend for 1 year and with a total value of up to £432,000.

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority has been utilising outdoor and residential activity-based programmes which include reflective practice, coaching and facilitated learning as part of its suite of employee development programmes for over a decade.
4. The programmes - which are designed in partnership with members of the Authority's Training and Organisational Development teams - enable participants to develop self-awareness, resilience, confidence and effective leadership

behaviours in a practical way, with participants encouraged to step outside their comfort zones, and demonstrate adaptability, and collaborative problem-solving.

5. Incorporating this learning approach in development programmes has played a pivotal role in enhancing leadership capability and embedding the Service's values and behaviours across Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.
6. As well as being fully incorporated into the Authority's Charter Management Institute (CMI) leadership development programmes, each new firefighter recruit cohort also undertakes a three-day residential activity-based development programme as part of their initial firefighter recruit training course.
7. Experience has shown that this type of course provides a strong foundation for firefighter recruits both in terms of personal effectiveness and team integration, with recruit cohorts building trust, communication skills and developing mutual reliance—core attributes for safe and effective operational firefighting.
8. The current arrangement for the provision of development training has been in place since 2022 and in advance of a new procurement process, a review of Service requirements was undertaken and a new specification for future service needs was created.
9. Following advice from the Procurement Team, The Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation framework agreement was selected as an appropriate route to market. This framework agreement establishes a fully transparent process, providing suppliers with all tender documents, including full requirements specification, evaluation criteria and contract terms at the start of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) process, allowing them to make a more informed decision on whether to participate.
10. On the conclusion of the ITT, one response was received which was by Brathay Trust Ltd.
11. Following the completion of an appropriate selection process, including presentation, Brathay Trust Ltd have been determined as suitable for this provision.
12. The Authority has experience of working with Brathay Trust Ltd, and as incumbent provider it has previously worked in partnership to deliver high quality, bespoke training for a range of learning requirements across Apprenticeship personal development, Firefighter recruit training and Supervisory Manager (Leading Others) and Middle Manager (Leading the Function) leadership development training.
13. The award of a contract for a term of four years would allow the Authority to plan its provision of personal development, leadership and values development as part of its People Plan 2024-27 utilising a proven and reliable service.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is contained in Appendix A.

Staff Implications

15. Qualitative and quantitative feedback including Apprenticeship outcomes demonstrates that this training approach remains effective and provides staff with excellent development input.
16. Continued delivery will further ensure that key learning remains effectively aligned to the Service's Leadership Message, Values and the Core Code of Ethics for Fire & Rescue Services.

Legal Implications

17. The route to market is compliant with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and has been approved by the Head of Procurement.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

18. The total potential cost of this contract is £432,000 and reflects workforce planning estimates across recruitment and ongoing development of existing staff.
19. The costs for the learning and development programme is incorporated into existing staff training and development budgets.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

20. All training provision is covered by appropriate risk assessments.
21. Delivery of training supports the development and performance of staff, ensuring they understand Authority expectations and build key skills needed for their roles.

Environmental Implications

22. In order to limit environment impact, travel arrangements will be made in accordance with the Authority's Travel Hierarchy and Making Travel Arrangements Service Instruction.
23. Brathay Trust Ltd aim to reduce environmental impact by integrating nature connectivity into their programmes, participating in local reforestation and adopting sustainable practices at their residential centre.

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.*

24. The training provisions detailed will develop staff and enable them to effectively deliver against functional and corporate objectives, providing them with valuable knowledge, skills and behaviours that supports the achievement of the Authority's Vision and purpose.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA Merseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **A**uthority

MFRS Merseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **S**ervice

ITT Invitation To Tender