

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY (ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING)		
DATE:	11 JUNE 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/01/2627
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON	REPORT AUTHOR:	DAN CARTWRIGHT
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT), HYWYN PRITCHARD, IAN WARNE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	NATIONAL RESILIENCE CBRN MASS DECONTAMINATION PROJECT - RADIATION PORTAL MONITORS		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise and seek authorisation to procure 30 x Radiation Portals Monitors (RPM), to compliment the Mass Decontamination (MD) capability.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report; and
 - b) approve the award of a contract valued at £605,500 to Southern Scientific for the procurement of 30 x RPM.

Introduction and Background

3. As part of the national capability uplift programme that supports National Resilience (NR), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Cabinet Office, and wider government departments are currently working to improve resilience against incidents of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear incidents (CBRN) nature. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) are the Lead Authority for NR.
4. The MD project seeks to improve the Fire and Rescue Service's mass decontamination capability for radiological contaminants, aligning with broader government efforts to strengthen national resilience.
5. The RPM, or Pedestrian Radiation Portal Monitor, is a passive, non-intrusive detection system that scans people for illicit or unauthorized radioactive

materials. Similar to airport metal detectors these portals are installed at borders, seaports, airports, and nuclear facilities.

6. RPMs will support National Resilience in mass decontamination during radiological dispersal events by screening the public for radioactive contamination. The portals enable rapid casualty triage for decontamination and support the Radiation Monitoring Unit (RMU), managed by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).
7. Purchasing RPMs follows JESIP principles, strengthens interoperability across blue-light services, and supports integrated CBRN response and consistent NR-aligned operations.
8. In order to procure the equipment, a further competition was undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (project reference MFRS 2526-53). The framework agreement used was the Home Office's Radiological Nuclear Detection Framework (Lot 4), providing a robust and competitive route to market for the Radiation Portals and ensuring supplier capability, value for money, and compliance through transparent competition and established procurement governance.
9. As part of the competition an expression of interest was sent to all suppliers of which two submitted bids. Thereafter an equipment trial was held at the Authority's TDA as part of the evaluation process.
10. The bids were evaluated with the preferred bidder identified as Southern Scientific.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. From an Equality Impact Assessment perspective, the purchase of this equipment does not raise equality concerns, as the specification ensured that any person whether ambulant or non-ambulant is able to pass through the RPM.
12. Operation of the RPM will be supported through appropriate training and reasonable adjustments where required, ensuring no indirect discrimination against staff with protected characteristics.
13. Improved detection and decision-making capability will support a safer, more effective response that benefits all communities equally, including vulnerable populations, and is therefore operationally neutral with no anticipated adverse or disproportionate impact on any protected group.

Staff Implications

14. Training to FRS personnel, who would operate the equipment, will be provided via NR.

Legal Implications

15. The procurement process detailed within the report aligns fully with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and provides a transparent, auditable, and proportionate mechanism to secure the required capability.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

16. In January 2025, the Authority obtained targeted funding from Homeland Security Group (HSG) to advance the radiation equipment within the MD capability, which was identified as a high priority need as part of the New Dimensions Review.
17. The contract award to Southern Scientific for the value of £605,500 will be funded from the grant received from HSG.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

18. The device will improve risk management and health and safety for both public and emergency responders. The equipment will enhance both operational, and health and safety risks, due to rapid detection of radiological hazards, safeguarding personnel, and the public, and allow timely proportionate decisions during incidents.

Environmental Implications

19. The equipment is not a threat to the environment and will directly enhance protection of the environment through detection of radiological contamination, reducing the chances of environmental spread, prolonged exposure, secondary contamination, and ineffective mitigation.

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.*

20. The RPM uplift programme supports the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision as the Lead Authority for National Resilience to serve and protect the public, keeping people safe.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CBRN	C hemical B iological R adiological N uclear
RPM	R adiation P ortal M onitor
RMU	R adiation M onitoring U nit
MD	M ass D econtamination
UKHSA	U K H ealth S ecurity A gency
FRS	F ire and R escue S ervice
MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority
PPE	P ersonal P rotective E quipment