| MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY | | | |
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| **MEETING OF THE:** | **AUTHORITY BUDGET MEETING** | | |
| **DATE:** | **22ND FEBRUARY 2018** | **REPORT NUMBER** | **CFO/017/18** |
| **PRESENTING OFFICER** | **CHIEF FIRE OFFICER** | | |
| **RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** | **AM PAUL MURPHY** | **REPORT AUTHOR:** | **GM ROB PRITCHARD** |
| **OFFICERS CONSULTED:** | **NW OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT GROUP OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT TEAM PROCUREMENT TEAM IAN CUMMINS.** | | |
| **TITLE OF REPORT:** | **AWARDING OF THE REGIONAL CONTRACT FOR STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTING KIT** | | |

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|---|---|---|
| **APPENDICES:** | **N/A** | |

## Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the arrangements currently in place for the issue of structural firefighting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and to approve the proposals to revert back to individual issue of PPE and issue Technical Rescue Jackets.

## Recommendation

2. That Members;
    a. Note the requirement for a North West competitive tender process to take place in 2018.
    b. Approve a change of issue from the current pooled stock arrangement to individual issue. (Proposal 1)
    c. Approve the additional purchase of a lightweight working rig tunic suitable for non-fire related activity which will be purchased off a current North West framework. (Proposal 2)

## Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that the Service previously ran a North West (NW) tender process for structural firefighting PPE. This contract is due to expire so there is a need to review the current arrangements.

4. National research has been undertaken regarding the suitability of unisex firefighting tunics and over trousers. The current sizing profile utilised within the Service is for male firefighters which has highlighted sizing problems for female firefighters. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) are now able to issue male and female fitted PPE as a result of suppliers providing a suitable sizing standard for male and female firefighters.

5. Current arrangements for structural firefighting PPE within the Service are for a pooled stock of fire kit to be allocated to each station. This is based on an issue of 1.6 tunics and over trousers per firefighter. This was originally introduced as a potential efficiency saving however latterly it has proven problematic. Issues such as insufficient stock being kept available at stations have arisen. This is due to various reasons such as detached duties, station moves and closures, lack of individual responsibility and ownership. On occasions, there is the potential for firefighters to wear ill-fitting PPE and therefore an increase to the risk of thermal exposure. Feedback has been sought at various times over this issue with a clear wish expressed to return to personal issue.

6. Proposal 1: To provide 2 full sets of structural firefighting PPE consisting of tunics and over trousers to each firefighter (personal issue). The exact cost of the replacement PPE will not be known until the preferred bidder is identified. If It will be necessary to make an initial purchase of approximately 325 full sets of PPE. The new 325 sets will be worn alongside older PPE however the Operational Equipment Team will ensure a sizing profile exercise is carried out to minimise the mixing of existing sets.

7. As there is now the option to purchase specific female firefighters PPE, it is the intention to purchase these as part of the initial 325 sets.

8. Nationally, Services are utilising rank markings and identification insignia such as service number or name on tunics. This will be included as an option within the tender process.

9. Estimated new expenditure.

| **Operational staff** | **Fire tunic (current cost)** | **Total cost (1 per person)** | **Total cost (2 per person)** | **Additional units x325** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 650 | £240 | £156,000 | £312,000 | £78,000 |

| **Operational staff** | **Over Trousers (current cost)** | **Total cost (1 per person)** | **Total cost (2 per person)** | **Additional units x325** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 650 | £200 | £130,000 | £260,000 | £65,000 |

| **Operational staff** | **Combined** | **Total cost (1 new per person)** | **Total cost (2 new per person)** | **Additional units x325** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 650 | £440 | £286,000 | £572,000 | **£143,000** |

These figures are estimated showing current and proposed stock levels and value. The last column estimates cost for an additional issue of 0.5 per person resulting in 2 sets to each firefighter. It is envisaged that the current revenue budget will provide sufficient funding once the additional purchase has been

made. The current stock will be monitored as due to age, a large amount will require replacing over the next few years.

10. Proposal 2: The purchase and issue of 2 x Technical Rescue Jackets (TRJ) for all operational staff. Research has indicated that for operational incidents not requiring the use of full structural firefighting PPE, such as Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), rescues from height etc. there is less practicality and more discomfort to staff wearing full firefighting tunics with the additional high visibility jacket. As a result several Authorities have moved to a combined working tunic, known as a TRJ.

11. TRJs have very limited thermal protection but are manufactured with integral high visibility marking. The current fire tunics are not designed for technical rescue, subsequently, they do not provide enhanced protection against sharps resulting in easy damage and expensive repair costs. They are also impractical in hot weather resulting in unnecessary discomfort during summer months. The proposal of purchasing the TRJs provides a greater level of protection at RTC's and prevents the necessity of wearing tunics and high visibility jackets.

12. Whilst there would be a cost to this provision some savings will be realised as hi-visibility jackets will no longer be required (36 appliances with 5 x hi-viz jackets at an estimated cost of £10,500).

13. Estimated new expenditure:

| Operational staff | Tech rescue jacket cost | Total cost (1 per person) | Total cost (2 per person) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 650 | £170 | £110,500 | £221,000 |

As above there may be some potential cost savings to offset some of the cost long-term with the reduced investment required in hi-visibility jackets and the reduced wear on fire tunics.

Procurement

14. MFRA will be required to undertake a European Union (EU) tender process on behalf of the North West FRA's. The aims of the project will include compatibility with current personal protective equipment and value for money. The requirement for TRJs is already covered on the NW Tender framework.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The move away from a unisex provision of structural firefighting PPE will ensure male and female firefighters are afforded a better level of fit for their PPE. A full sizing profile exercise will take place prior to issue.

## Staff Implications

16. There are no staff implications as the tender specification will meet all requisite standards and should afford better individual fit and wearer comfort.

## Legal Implications

17. The PPE procurement process will be run compliantly as an EU open tender. A compliant tender framework exists for TRJ's.
18. The PPE process is subject to Member approval as the contract value will exceed £250,000. The Authority's Constitution Standing Order 19.2(f) requires all those contracts exceeding this value to be approved by the Authority.

## Financial Implications & Value for Money

19. The purchase and distribution of the TRJs will require an initial one-off £221k after which Jackets will be replaced as and when required and that cost can be contained within the clothing budget. The move back to personal PPE issue will require an initial one-off resource, estimated at up to £143k, and thereafter ongoing replaced of PPE can be contained within the existing clothing budget.

20. The initial one-off funding requirement of up to £364k will be met from a clothing reserve. The reserve currently stands at £0.058m but will be increased from expected 2017/18 underspends on the PPE and other budget heads, and if required a transfer from the capital reserve..

## Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

21. The Authority continually seeks to purchase the best available products ensuring firefighters are provided with the highest level of PPE offering the greatest level of wearer comfort which is essential during prolonged wears. The proposal also offers an improved fit for a diverse workforce.

## Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

22. The recommendations will allow the Authority to provide the best and most cost effective PPE for operational staff attending incidents.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS