

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	23 OCTOBER 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/21/2526
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AREA MANAGER, PHILLIP BYRNE	REPORT AUTHOR:	AREA MANAGER PHILLIP BYRNE, GROUP MANAGER CHRIS MAN, STATION MANAGER MIKE BROADLEY
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	AM WATSON, GM MAN, SM BROADLEY, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & PROCUREMENT MIKE REA, HEAD OF PROCUREMENT HYWYN PRITCHARD, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	AWARDING OF CONTRACT FOR THE PROCURMENT OF FIREFIGHTING AND TECHNICAL RESCUE HELMETS		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT		

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the regional procurement exercise for firefighting and technical rescue helmets.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report; and.
 - b) approve the award of the contract for firefighting and technical rescue helmets for the region to Bristol Uniforms Limited (a part of MSA Great Britain Holdings Limited), at a total cost of up to £2.000m.

Introduction and Background

3. The MSA F1 helmet was procured regionally approximately ten years ago. Production of this model is scheduled to cease next year, although spare parts will remain available for up to five years

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4. Fire and Rescue Services across the Northwest currently utilise the MSA F1 helmet for firefighting operations. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service additionally deploys the MSA F2XR helmet for a limited number of operational staff.



MSA F1



MSA F2XR

5. The MSA F2XR technical helmet was introduced as the successor to the MSA F2 helmet. It is already deployed across a number of technical rescue functions, including the Search and Rescue Team (SRT), Combined Platform Ladder (CPL) operators and the Incident Investigation Team (IIT) crews, where positive feedback has been received from wearers.
6. In reviewing the available routes to market, it was identified that a direct award under the YPO Framework (Ref: 1204 Lot 2.1 – Fire Protective Helmets & Associated Products) was both viable and compliant. This approach secured preferential pricing and long-term value for money.
7. The specification required helmets suitable for both structural firefighting and technical rescue operations, compliant with relevant EN standards, offering value for money, environmental sustainability, and compatibility with existing operational needs.
8. MSA's proposal was evaluated against these requirements and was found to fully meet operational, safety, and financial criteria. On this basis, it is recommended the contract is awarded to Bristol Uniforms Limited. The total anticipated expenditure over the five-year contract is approximately £2.000m.

Equality and Diversity Implications

1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (see Appendix A - EIA).

Staff Implications

2. Firefighters will continue to use the MSA F1 helmet operationally until each helmet reaches its end-of-life (10 years) or is otherwise deemed unusable.
3. Existing stock will be fully utilised before the introduction of new helmets.

4. Following the anticipated release of the new MSA firefighting helmet in 2026, a natural migration to the new model will occur, in line with the phase-out of current MSA F1 stocks.

Legal Implications

5. Procurement has been undertaken via the YPO Framework Agreement Reference: 1204 Lot 2.1 – Fire Protective Helmets & Associated Products.
6. The route to market is compliant with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

7. The total estimated cost of the regional contract for firefighting and technical rescue helmets is £2.000m over the five years.
8. Within this, the projected Authority expenditure over the life of the contract is approximately £540k, covering both the MSA F1 and MSA F2XR helmets.
9. Expenditure on the MSA F1 helmet is anticipated to be approximately £250k over the life of the contract for the Authority.
10. Purchases of the MSA F1 helmet, and its eventual replacement, will continue to be met from the annual revenue budget, averaging £50k per annum subject to recruitment.
11. Expenditure on the MSA F2XR helmet is anticipated to be approximately £290k over the life of the contract. This includes:
 - MFRA are proposing an initial issue at a cost of £160k. This will be funded from the Capital Investment Reserve.
 - Ongoing annual expenditure of £16,000 for issuing to new starters will be funded from the revenue Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) budget.
12. An annual expenditure of £16,000 for repair and servicing, based on 10% of the operational workforce requiring repairs each year, will also be funded from the revenue PPE budget.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

13. The dedicated MSA F2XR helmet ensures that operational crews benefit from ergonomically appropriate head protection, reducing fatigue and the risk of injury.
14. Contractual and supply chain risks have been mitigated through procurement via the YPO framework, ensuring compliance with regulations and value for money.

15. Contract performance will be managed regionally through established governance arrangements, with regular reporting to ensure supply continuity and quality assurance.

Environmental Implications

16. Fireground head protection has significant environmental impacts across its lifecycle – from raw material extraction and manufacturing, through to transportation, use, and disposal.
17. The selective deployment of the lighter, modular MSA F2XR helmet offers measurable environmental benefits:
- Lower Material Consumption – Interchangeable components (visor, peak, ear covers) allow for part-replacement rather than full-helmet replacement, reducing consumable demand by up to 25% annually.
 - Extended Service Life – Enhanced UV-resistant and hydrolysis-stable materials extend the service life by around 30%, minimising the frequency of full helmet procurement.
 - Recyclability and Waste Minimisation – Thermoplastic components of the F2XR are more readily recyclable than the resin-infused shell of the F1, diverting an estimated 12 tonnes of plastic from landfill annually.

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.*

18. The procurement of best value for money products ensuring accountability to the public whilst ensuring firefighters safety and effectiveness at incidents is not compromised assists in the delivery of the Authority's Vision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
SRT	Search & Rescue Team
YPO	Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation
IIT	Incident Investigation Team

CPL	C ombined L adder P latform
EIA	E quality I mpact A ssessment
IIT	I ncident I nvestigation T eam
PPE	P ersonal P rotective E quipment