

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 SEPTEMBER 2026	REPORT NO:	CFO/09/2627
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	HEAD OF ESTATES, STEWART WOODS / ESTATES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ANTHONY HOLLAND
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD STRATEGIC LESADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS ACROSS MFRS ESTATE		
APPENDICES:	NONE		

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the procurement exercise to award a call-off contract to DES Energy for a period of up to three years.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note phase 1 of the PV installation programme is proposed to be undertaken at the following sites.
 - Vesty 5B
 - Vesty 1
 - Crosby Fire Station; and
 - b) approve the award of a call-off contract to DES Energy, with a total contract value of up to £1.000m over a three-year term, to facilitate the phased installation of PV systems across the MFRS estate. (The cost of the Phase 1 works is £87,650. Subject to the successful completion of phase 1, the remaining sites will be progressed. Future phases will be subject to detailed site surveys, design development, cost appraisal, and satisfactory contractor performance).

Introduction and Background

3. During 2025, the North West Net Zero Hub undertook desktop solar assessment studies across 18 MFRS sites. The assessments estimated that a capital investment of approximately £1.640m could deliver annual energy costs savings of around £0.346m. This equates to an estimated payback period of five years, annual carbon savings exceeding 250 tonnes of CO₂, and potential cumulative energy cost savings of up to £13.000m over a 25 year period, including projected energy cost inflation.
4. The installation of photovoltaic (PV) systems will reduce reliance on grid-supplied electricity and support MFRS in achieving its Net Zero ambitions. Investment in renewable energy technologies is a key element of the Authority's strategy to reduce carbon emissions, enhance sustainability, and mitigate future energy cost increases.
5. In July 2025, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the creation of a £2.000m Carbon Net Zero Reserve. This reserve was established to support investment in renewable technologies and sustainability initiatives that reduce carbon emissions and deliver long-term operational savings.
6. A review of the procurement options for the delivery of the solar PV programme was jointly undertaken by the Estates and Procurement departments. The Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework was identified as the most appropriate route to market. All contractors on the framework were invited to submit proposals, with Five contractors submitting system designs and associated costs, for the Phase 1 installations at Crosby Fire Station, Vesty 1 Workshops and Vesty 5B. Subject to successful completion of Phase 1, subsequent site installations will be awarded through the same arrangement following detailed surveys and cost assessments. The proposed contract term is three years.
7. The submitted proposals varied significantly in terms of system design, generation capacity, number of panels, and installation methodology. Tendered costs for the three sites ranged from £87,650 to £339,000.
8. Tender submissions were evaluated using a weighted scoring methodology comprising 60% commercial criteria and 40% quality criteria. DES Energy achieved the highest overall score and has therefore been identified as the preferred bidder. DES Energy is an established North West-based supplier with relevant experience in the delivery of photovoltaic installations.
9. To provide independent assurance, the Estates Department appointed both an electrical design consultant and a health and safety adviser to review the technical submissions received. The independent review confirmed that the DES Energy proposal met the Authority's requirements and represented the most advantageous submission.

10. Estates and Procurement officers have subsequently undertaken a detailed technical review of the preferred proposal and held clarification meetings to discuss and refine the Phase 1 designs.
11. The table below summarises the proposed capital investment and estimated payback periods submitted by DES Energy for the phase 1 installations.

Site	PV Installation cost	Payback period
Crosby Fire Station	£34,250.00	7.9 years
Vesty 5B	£16,650.00	6.2 years
Vesty 1	£36,750.00	4.8 years
Total *	£87,650.00	

**PV installation cost, subject to structural roof survey.*

12. Based on the costs associated with the initial Phase 1 installations, the estimated capital requirement for the remaining identified sites is approximately £900,000. Actual costs will be dependent upon site-specific survey findings, system sizing, structural considerations, and grid connection requirements.
13. Subject to Authority approval, successful completion of the contractual process, and approval by the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO), works are expected to commence at the earliest opportunity.
14. The proposed investment supports the Authority's commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2040, reducing energy expenditure, improving the environmental performance of the estate, and increasing resilience against future fluctuations in energy prices. The phased approach minimises delivery risk while allowing lessons learned from Phase 1 to inform future installations across the estate.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. No equality and diversity implications have been identified from this building work.

Staff Implications

16. The scheme can be managed by the current Estates Team. No other staff implications arise from the installation of PVs.

Legal Implications

17. A successful tendering process has been completed. The contract will be awarded in compliance with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

18. A JCT Intermediate contract would be signed and agreed with the contractor subject to Authority approval.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

19. The total costs of the project is £1.000m, comprising:
- Phase 1 £87,650, and
 - a further call-off order of £912,350 for the remaining sites.
20. The financial model for the Phase 1 works indicates estimated lifetime savings of approximately £430,837, based on a 25-year operational life of the equipment. The potential cumulative energy cost savings indicated by the Net Zero Hub for the whole project could produce up to £13.000m over a 25-year period, including projected energy cost inflation.
21. The project will be funded from the Carbon Net Zero Reserve.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

22. The tender documents covered:
- a) Design
 - b) Programme
 - c) Risk assessment and Health and Safety
 - d) Compliance with specification
 - e) Staff
 - f) Social Value
 - g) Sustainability of Products
 - h) Handover & documents
23. The works will be managed by Estates under a permit to work.

Environmental Implications

24. The installation of PVs will assist in reducing the carbon emission of the building stock, the installation of renewable energy is a key consideration in the route map to Net Zero.

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.*

25. The introduction of renewable energy will assist in reducing our impact on the environment.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is the service
DNO	District Network Operator
PV	Photovoltaic
YPO	Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (Public Sector procurement tool)