

| MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY |                                                                                                    |                |                                         |
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| MEETING OF THE:                      | COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE                                                          |                |                                         |
| DATE:                                | 3 SEPTEMBER 2026                                                                                   | REPORT NO:     | CFO/11/2627                             |
| PRESENTING OFFICER                   | CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE                                                                    |                |                                         |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:                 | AREA MANAGER, DAVID WATSON                                                                         | REPORT AUTHOR: | NRAT CAPABILITY OFFICER, DAN CARTWRIGHT |
| OFFICERS CONSULTED:                  | HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD, GROUP MANAGER KEIRAN GILLAM, STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) |                |                                         |
| TITLE OF REPORT:                     | PROCUREMENT OF NEXT GENERATION PPE                                                                 |                |                                         |

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| APPENDICES: | NONE |
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### Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the proposed procurement of additional Next Generation (NextGen) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), resulting in a contract value that exceeds the amount approved by the Authority in January 2026. This procurement forms part of the National Resilience DIM Uplift Programme.

### Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
  - a) note the contents of the report; and
  - b) approve the award of the contract to the West Midlands Police Crime & Commissioner for the procurement of NextGen PPE, at a total cost of £507,205.40.

### Introduction and Background

3. The current phase of the Detection Identification & Monitoring (DIM) Uplift Programme, as part of the New Dimensions 2 Programme (ND2) focuses on the deployment and operationalisation of NextGen PPE.
4. Members approved a contract award of £450,725.40 for NextGen PPE in January 2026 (CFO/35/2526). This report seeks Members approval for a revised total contract value of £507,025.40, representing an increase of £56,300.00.
5. The revised contract value reflects an increase in the proposed order quantity following the identification of additional funding within the HSG Radiation and PPE funding allocation. This additional funding will enable the Authority to

procure additional NextGen PPE, strengthening both operational resilience and training capacity.

6. This phase is fully aligned with JESIP principles and strengthens interoperability across all three blue-light services. The introduction of NextGen PPE enhances collective capability, supports integrated CBRN response arrangements, and ensures consistency of operational practice in line with NR requirements.

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#### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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7. There are no identified equality or diversity implications related to the procurement of NextGen. The NextGen PPE are individually sized specialised protective equipment designed to ensure safe operation in CBRN environments, prioritising safety across all personnel roles regardless of background or identity.

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#### **Staff Implications**

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8. There are no staff implications.

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#### **Legal Implications**

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9. The route to market would be for the Authority to contract with the West Midlands Police Crime & Commissioner for the NextGen PPE as manufactured by Blucher.
10. Schedule 2 (Exempted Contracts) of the Procurement Act 2023 allows for such contracts under paragraph 3 (Horizontal Arrangements) within Part 1 Counterparty Exempted Contracts.

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#### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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11. In January 2025, the Authority received dedicated funding from the HSG. The previous report identified £450,725.40 as being ring-fenced for NextGen PPE. Following the identification of additional funding within the HSG Radiation and PPE funding allocation, the proposed contract value has increased by £56,300.00 to £507,025.40.
12. The additional funding will enable the procurement of further NextGen PPE, strengthening resilience through both operational deployment and enhanced training capacity. The funding must be applied in line with the phased NextGen acquisition schedule to ensure programme continuity and maintain uninterrupted operational capability.

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#### **Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

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13. Without NextGen continuity, the FRS may face heightened risks to interoperability, as NextGen is the standard for multi-agency response coordination with NHS and Police.

14. Departing from this standard could undermine both health and safety standards and reduce the efficacy of multi-agency CBRN responses, especially in the event of large-scale or catastrophic incidents.

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## Environmental Implications

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15. The procurement of NextGen from a Multi-Agency Strategic Reserve aligns with sustainability goals by maintaining existing equipment specifications, thereby reducing the environmental impact associated with introducing new PPE.
16. Aligning with the Police and NHS using the current NextGen PPE avoids additional manufacturing demands, minimises waste from discontinued equipment, and promotes responsible environmental practices within the procurement process.

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**Contribution to Our Vision:** *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

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**Our Purpose:** *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

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17. The NextGen Replacement Strategy supports Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service's vision by ensuring the continued availability of reliable, compliant PPE that maintains operational readiness for CBRN incidents, safeguards personnel and the public, and sustains interoperability with key partners including the NHS and Police. The strategy is cost-effective, demonstrates effective use of public funds, reinforcing accountability, public confidence, and the Service's commitment to protecting communities.

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## BACKGROUND PAPERS

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**CFO/35/26** NextGen PPE

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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|              |                                                          |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CBRN</b>  | Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear                 |
| <b>DIM</b>   | Detection Identification & Monitoring                    |
| <b>FRS</b>   | Fire and Rescue Service                                  |
| <b>HSG</b>   | Homeland Security Group                                  |
| <b>MFRA</b>  | Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority                     |
| <b>MFRS</b>  | Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service                       |
| <b>NCBRN</b> | National Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Centre |
| <b>NR</b>    | National Resilience                                      |
| <b>PPE</b>   | Personal Protective Equipment                            |