

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority			
Meeting of the:	Authority		
Date:	29 October 2026	Report No:	CFO/17/2627
Presenting Officer:	Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle		
Responsible Officer:	Area Manager, David Watson	Report Author:	Staton Manager, Peter Marnick
Officers Consulted:	Head of Procurement, Hywyn Pritchard, Category Manager, Martin Roberts, Group Manager, Paul Hitchen, Group Manager Mark Baldwin, Usar Capability Officers, Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)		
Title of Report:	New Dimensions 2 Procurement of USAR WEBER Rescue Equipment		

Appendices:	None
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Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the replacement of existing hydraulic rescue equipment, hydraulic rescue rams and outdated lifting equipment with WEBER eDraulic rescue equipment, supporting greater standardisation across the UK Urban Search and Rescue capability.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members:
 - a) note the contents of the report; and
 - b) approve the award of the contract to WEBER Rescue Systems for the purchase of the equipment listed below at an estimated total cost of £660,000 plus freight and associated delivery costs.

Introduction and Background

3. New Dimensions 2 (ND2) is a national capability uplift programme that supports National Resilience (NR). The programme is authorised and funded by UK Government via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) are the Lead Authority for NR. Part of the national capability provides assets for Urban Search & Rescue (USAR).
4. The original New Dimension programme identified and delivered national assets which enhanced the Fire & Rescue response to a range of catastrophic incidents, including natural and deliberate events, and specifically included response to large scale structural collapse and serious transport incidents.

5. The USAR capability currently has a wide variety of rescue tools, many of which are hydraulic supplied by petrol generators or use batteries which are not compatible with any other equipment held.
6. The USAR capability currently operates a range of WEBER rescue equipment procured through the first phase of the ND2 Programme. The equipment has been successfully introduced across operational modules and has demonstrated reliability, effectiveness and compatibility with existing rescue procedures.
7. It also provides improved performance, reduced equipment weight, better ergonomics and greater efficiency during structural collapse, transport and technical rescue incidents. The equipment is compatible with the WEBER Smart Force theft-protection software.
8. Additional equipment is required to complete standardisation across the capability and support the combination of two existing USAR modules into a single operational module. The proposed procurement comprises:
 - WEBER Continuous Cutter (RSJ Cutter) x 20
 - WEBER SmartForce Mini Cutter x 40
 - WEBER B10 Jack x 40
 - Glass suckers x 40
 - HGV airbag cover and two-piece set x 20
 - Sharps protection set with HGV upgrade x 20
9. The procurement will establish a common equipment platform, providing consistency in equipment selection, training, maintenance, asset management and operational procedures. Standardisation will improve interoperability between USAR teams, reduce complexity during national deployments and support safer and more effective operations.
10. The proposal has been assessed against operational requirements, compatibility with existing equipment, whole-life costs and long-term value for money. WEBER remains the most appropriate solution because of its compatibility with equipment already procured through the ND2 Programme and its established use within the capability.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no identified equality or diversity implications associated with this procurement. WEBER rescue systems support safe and effective operations for all personnel and provide operational benefits across the workforce, regardless of background, identity or personal characteristics.

Staff Implications

12. There are no adverse staffing implications. Standardising the equipment will simplify training, maintenance and deployment procedures while improving safety and operational efficiency.

Legal Implications

13. The proposed award is based on the requirement for compatibility and interoperability with existing WEBER equipment already procured through the ND2 Programme. Procuring alternative equipment would introduce operational, training, maintenance and asset management complexities, reducing the benefits of national standardisation and increasing lifecycle costs. The direct award route is therefore considered justified under the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023.
14. The procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and all associated transparency requirements.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. Funding for the equipment is being provided by MHCLG as part of the ND2 USAR project. The estimated value of the procurement is approximately £660,000 plus freight and associated costs.
16. The procurement represents value for money by maximising the existing investment in WEBER equipment, avoiding duplicated training and procedures, removing the need to maintain multiple rescue-tool platforms and reducing maintenance, servicing and spare-parts costs. It will also support the combination of two USAR modules into a single operational capability.
17. The proposal provides a sustainable and efficient rescue capability, with anticipated operational efficiencies and longer-term savings over the life of the equipment.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

18. Further standardisation of WEBER rescue equipment will strengthen operational safety and risk management. A common equipment platform will improve interoperability, equipment familiarity and operational consistency, while enabling faster deployment, simpler training and more efficient maintenance arrangements.
19. Improved familiarity and competence should reduce the potential for operational error and enhance responder safety during rescue incidents.

Environmental Implications

20. The procurement supports the Authority's environmental objectives by expanding an existing battery equipment platform rather than introducing an alternative system. Standardisation will reduce unnecessary duplication of equipment, spare parts and maintenance arrangements, supporting efficient asset management, minimising waste and maximising the use of existing investment.

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.*

21. The procurement supports Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's role as Lead Authority for National Resilience by maintaining a standardised and operationally ready rescue equipment platform for UK USAR operations and major incident response. It will strengthen national interoperability by enabling USAR teams to integrate and operate effectively during national deployments.

Background Papers

None

Glossary of Terms

MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice
MHCLG	M inistry of H ousing, C ommunities and L ocal G overnment
ND2	N ew D imensions 2 Programme
NR	N ational R esilience
USAR	U rban S earch A nd R escue