

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Item: 8

1 February 2017

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) funding

Report of the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

- 1.1 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has a proud history of providing technologically advanced personal protective equipment (PPE) to firefighters to ensure that they are suitably equipped to carry out their role.
- 1.2 The role of the firefighter has evolved significantly during recent years and continues to do so. As the firefighters role evolves, the equipment and resources that firefighters use to carry out their role need to evolve too. This means having PPE that suits the type of incident that firefighters attend, rather than having one type of PPE for every incident.
- 1.3 This paper outlines the need and the rationale for a new approach to PPE which reflects the diverse role firefighters undertake. This new approach to PPE is a smarter and better use of resources providing the right tools for the job.
- 1.4 The Service is in the process of implementing new innovative firefighting tactics and equipment under the Service Delivery Redesign. Updating the PPE provision ensures that firefighters will have the appropriate resources to deal effectively with the incidents that they attend.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Finance and General Purposes Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority approve £1.71m from the Service Transformation Reserve for the purchase of firefighting PPE.
- 2.2 That the Finance and General Purposes Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority approve to allocate the revenue budget surplus for the remaining years of the product life be transferred to a specific reserve to fund the next PPE replacement in 10 years time.
- 2.3 That the Finance and General Purposes Committee note the options for the route to market.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 HFRS strive to provide firefighters with the most technologically advanced PPE

available to enable them to carry out their duties safely, efficiently and to the highest standard. Introducing new PPE will help to ensure that HFRS firefighters use the most relevant PPE to suit the incident type, which will help to further improve firefighter safety at incidents.

- 3.2 Any future PPE that HFRS procures will need to address a number of issues that have been highlighted by our firefighters. These include concerns around comfort and freedom of movement. It is important that any future PPE purchased addresses these concerns whilst continuing to provide fire protection in accordance with or exceeding the European EN 469 standard. This is the European Standard that specifies minimum levels of performance requirements for protective clothing to be worn during firefighting operations and associated activities.
- 3.3 Currently firefighters are issued with structural PPE which is designed to protect wearers from compartment fires. This PPE is also worn to every other incident type that the HFRS attends, whether this is a road traffic collision, medical call, wildfire or structural fire. Matching PPE to the type of incident that firefighters attend will improve health and safety of firefighters and ultimately help to improve firefighter safety.
- 3.4 A different approach to firefighter PPE is now required that maintains the protection for structural fires and allows the comfort, freedom of movement and flexibility required for other fire and non-fire related incidents.
- 3.5 Updating firefighting PPE to match the needs of a firefighter is essential to maintain the high level of service that HFRS provides the communities of Hampshire.
- 3.6 From consultation with other fire and rescue services, there are a number who are seeking to introduce layered PPE to replace the traditional single layer structural firefighting PPE.
- 3.7 Greater Manchester FRS has recently implemented a layered approach to PPE, combining an inner jacket with a moisture barrier, suitable for RTC's and medical emergencies with an outer jacket. When used together these meet the European Standard EN469:2005 Level 2 for compartment firefighting.

4 Route to market

- 4.1 Kent and Medway FRS are currently going through a collaborative procurement exercise for the purchase of structural PPE. There are currently over 20 fire and rescue services that are showing an interest in procuring collaboratively. This collaboration is designed to replace the current South East fire and rescue services PPE framework, which HFRS currently use and expires within the next 12 months.
- 4.2 HFRS are keen supporters of collaborative working with other fire and rescue services and are exploring all options that are available for the purchase of new PPE. The Service will seek to collaborate on the procurement of PPE if the Services requirements are fully included in the procurement process. Should the collaborative procurement not meet the needs of the Service a different route to market will be sort, either via a different suitable framework or by HFRS going to market independently.

- 4.3 The projected timeframes for a collaborative procurement are similar to what HFRS would achieve if the Service was to go to tender by itself. The contract for the collaborative procurement award is expected to be made in Summer 2017.

5 Financial considerations and options considered

- 5.1 Each HFRS firefighter role is currently issued with two full sets of PPE and one helmet. PPE is currently expected to last for nine years.

- 5.1.1 A review of the PPE issued to firefighters has identified that there can be a reduction in number of sets required to be issued. The future issuing of PPE will be as follows:

- 5.1.2
- Wholetime Duty System (WDS) - two leggings, two structural tunics and two rescue jackets.
 - Retained Duty System (RDS) - two leggings, two structural tunics and two rescue jackets.
 - WDS/RDS on same station - two leggings, two structural tunics and two rescue jackets
 - WDS/RDS on different stations - three leggings, three structural tunics and three rescue jackets
 - Flexible Duty System Officers (FDS) – two leggings, one structural tunic and one rescue jacket

- 5.2 The current annual budget for PPE (including helmets, gloves and repair and maintenance) is £381,000, which is £3.81m over a 10 year period.

- 5.3 The Service has explored four options for the issuing of new PPE. Each of these options makes the assumption that the PPE will last for 10 years. An increased life expectancy is shown because firefighters will be able to wear appropriate PPE for each incident type, rather than wearing the same PPE for each incident that they attend. These are as follows:

- 5.3.1
1. Issue firefighters replacement PPE on a needs basis when current kits come to the end of life or when they are damaged beyond repair.
 2. Issue all firefighters two new sets of PPE in year one
 3. Issue all firefighters one set of kit in year one, and replace second kit as per option one.
 4. Fully Managed Service – includes, but not limited to
 - Issuing firefighters with new PPE
 - Washing PPE
 - Stock management
 - Replacements
 - Asset management and tracking

- 5.3.2 Appendix one gives an overview of the financial options considered.

- 5.3.3 Option two is recommended, as this would provide new PPE to all firefighters over the same short period of time, which will mean that all firefighters will have the same kit in the same situations. Health and safety of firefighters is the highest priority and by not issuing all firefighters with the same kit could be considered to disadvantage some firefighters.

- 5.3.4 Option two would be more cost effective over the ten year life span of the PPE compared to option four, which is likely to cost significantly more. This takes in account the evolving role of the firefighter and acknowledges that the PPE would be suitable to be deployed at a variety of fire and non-fire related incidents.
- 5.3.5 Options one and three would result in the Service having different sets of kits issued to firefighters across the county and would mean that structural PPE would be worn to every incident that a firefighter attends. As described previously in this paper, firefighters are increasingly attending medical emergencies and other non-fire related incidents, so it is key that the Service has PPE that reflects the varying nature of a firefighter's role.
- 5.4 Option two would require £1.71m to be allocated from reserves in order to purchase the PPE. The cost over the 10 year lifespan would be £3.92m, which is £11,000 per annum more than the current baseline budget; or £110,000 over the lifespan of the PPE.
- 5.5 Option two offers immediate benefits compared to option three, and over the total life of the PPE works out £100,000 less expensive.
- 5.6 If approved, there will need to be £1.71m contributing to the front loading of the cost of purchasing new PPE; this will result in a reduced annual budget requirement for the years three (£137,000) to ten (£207,000). It is recommended that the difference in the budget is put into reserves to fund the future purchase of PPE in 10 years time. This is predicted to be £1.6m.

6 Disposal of existing PPE

- 6.1 HFRS seeks to dispose of all items in an environmentally friendly and ethical way, whilst seeking the best value for the Service.
- 6.2 There are a number of options HFRS could use for the disposal of PPE. This could be by the Service choosing to dispose of the items or whether the disposal of old PPE is part of any future contracts for the supply of new PPE.

7 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives

- 7.1 Providing assets that are fit for purpose will enable our firefighters to provide the best level of service to the communities of Hampshire.

8 Risk analysis

- 8.1 Providing a multi layered PPE strategy is designed to increase comfort, reduce the risk of injury to our people and reflect the wide range of activities they carry out.
- 8.2 Advances in PPE technology have typically come about every four to six years. It is possible that during the 10 year life of the PPE, more advanced PPE will be developed, although this is not guaranteed. There is not a financial provision that has been made should this be the case. If the recommendations are accepted, HFRS will be committing to utilising the PPE purchased for a ten year period.
- 8.3 The costs provided have made a number of assumptions around the life span (10 years), wear and tear of the new kit and the cost of repair and maintenance. If

these assumptions are wrong, there could be an increase in the annual revenue costs, which would result in a decreased amount that would be able to be put in reserves, which is currently estimated at circa £1.6m. If the life span of the PPE is shorter than 10 years, this would have a significant impact on the HFRS budget. An increase in spending would be required sooner than is currently being planned for, and the whole life cost of the PPE would increase. HFRS can mitigate against these risks by ensuring that the tender process makes provisions for PPE that should have a 10 year life. There are pieces of kit in the Service currently that are over 10 years old and still comply to EN469:2005 Level 2. With a layered approach to kit, which will see specific PPE worn for specific incidents, HFRS expect that the PPE will last for 10 years, but this can not be guaranteed.

- 8.4 Option four would mitigate against the risks highlighted in section 8.3, but would require a significant increase in spending of £330,000 per annum or £3.33m over the 10 year period. These costs are considered to be too high and therefore option four was discounted.

9 People Impact Assessment

- 9.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.
- 9.2 PPE should not be a barrier to entry or retention for under represented groups within the fire and rescue service and any new PPE should provide increased comfort for female and male firefighters.

10 Resource implications

10.1 Human Resources

- 10.1.1 A PPE working group has been established to manage this piece of work. The working group consists of the following
- Sponsor – Head of Service: Physical Assets
 - Senior User – Area Manager Service Delivery Redesign
 - Procurement lead – Senior Category Manager
 - Financial lead – Senior Finance Business Partner
 - Technical Service Ops and Delivery Manager
 - Station Manager Equipment

- 10.1.2 This paper identifies HFRS need for structural PPE and the associated costs. Work-wear and uniform is out of scope and will be considered by the Strategic Vehicle and Equipment Board.

10.2 Physical Resources

All requirements will be contained within current resources.

10.3 Information and Communications Technology Resources

All requirements will be contained within current resources.

10.4 Financial Implications

- 10.4.1 The whole life cost of purchasing two new sets of PPE for each firefighter is £110,000 more than the current baseline budget. This is the equivalent of £11,000 per year, over 10 years.
- 10.4.2 Additional funding is required to frontload the cost of the PPE purchase and is estimated to be a total of £1.71m which would be required from the Transformation Reserve. Utilising this money from reserves would reduce the total reserves, and would mean this funding wasn't available for any other significant purchases or to fund other one off activities.
- 10.4.3 It is estimated that at the end of year 10 there would be circa £1.6m put in reserves to fund future PPE replacement.
- 10.4.4 The predicted costs are based on historical spend data and incorporate the helmet replacement programme.
- 10.4.5 Appendix A provides a full breakdown of the proposed costs.

11 Consultation

- 11.1 Staff have been involved in the development of the PPE user requirements, and will be engaged in any testing that is required where appropriate.

12 Conclusion

- 12.1 The role of the firefighter is evolving and the Service needs to ensure that firefighter PPE is suitable to be deployed at a variety of fire and non-fire related incidents. The proposal provides a recommended approach to help ensure that HFRS continue to provide safe systems of work for its operational staff.

13 Background papers

- 13.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

None