



**Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Report Title:</b>	Kit and Equipment
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	Friday 26 May 2023 at 10.00 am
<b>Chair:</b>	Cllr Jeremy Hilton
<b>Presenting Officer:</b>	<i>Mike Hammond Head of Logistics and Resources GFRS</i>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To update members on kit and equipment
<b>Planned Dates</b>	N/A
<b>Background documents:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices</b>	GFRS PPE Uniform
<b>Recommendations</b>	To note the content of the report

## **1. Personal Protective Equipment**

**1.1.** GFRS has a duty under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 to attend incidents and emergencies where people are in danger or distress with and without the involvement of fire. The default PPE clothing provided for operational staff is structural firefighting PPE – this incorporates high levels of thermal protection and is not always suitable for specialist rescues and other emergencies which can lead to an increase in core body temperatures.

**1.2.** Alternative PPE exists for swift water rescue, co-responder incidents (medical calls) and rope rescue and fire investigation. This PPE has been re-used and reissued to staff over the years, some of it being repaired several times. For example, the swift water rescue dry suits have been used since 2004 and rope rescue overalls have not been replaced in 20 years.

**1.3.** The Service must purchase specialist PPE that is compliant with current recognised standards and meets Fire Service National guidance following recent major incidents and events.

**1.4.** The focus of the PPE project will be:-

- A refresh of all swift water PPE
- Provision of suitable overalls and footwear for co-responders
- Suitable overalls for Fire Investigation Officers
- Footwear and clothing for rope rescue crews, provision of rescue jackets for all operational staff
- Provision of flash hoods to prevent exposure to carcinogens at fire incidents

The total investment in the above project is £289k spread over 2022 – 2024.

## **2. Future requirements for firefighting PPE:**

**2.1.** A Total Care Package is a complete package of supplying, maintaining, repairing, washing and replacing PPE. GFRS took the decision to leave its Total Care Package for its Firefighting PPE in 2017 by buying its own stock.

**2.2.** Following this decision GFRS has complete responsibility for the cleaning, maintenance and replacement of PPE. Reserve stocks are also required when there are large incidents or a large number of incidents to keep firefighter protected. This approach to PPE provision has come with some positives and many challenges:

- Needing to hold enough stock to cover the changing make up of staff sizes within the service.
- Having two contracts in place to maintain a continue supply of PPE and to clean this PPE for operational use
- Ordering additional sets of PPE for non-standard sizes held in stock.
- Providing additional sets of kit for staff who have dual contracts (work as Wholetime and On-call Firefighters).
- Ensuring the integrity of PPE to be confident it maintains its protective characteristics.

- An additional pressure exists resulting from the turnover of staff. PPE is re-issued whenever possible following thorough checks due to the high cost of replacements.
- A working group will be set up in 2026 to undertake a review of PPE to look at options on moving back into a Total Care Package for 2028

### **3. General Price Increases/ additional costs**

**3.1.** The cost of living crisis is having an impact on the whole country and the supply of goods is becoming a real challenge. The supply timeline can be considerably longer than in previous years. To put this into context, a stretcher that was ordered in July 2021 was not delivered until October 2022 a delivery period of 15 months. The cost of consumables and specialist equipment replacement is putting current budgets under considerable pressure too. The following are a just a few examples what we are having to manage regarding our budget pressures. These are factors that need to be taken into consideration as part of the budget planning:

- A handheld Hose Branch that cost £300.00 ,now costs £800.00
- Firefighter gloves £42.00, now costs £ 97.00
- Hose 70mm £129.23, now costs £191.77
- High pressure hose for cutting equipment hydraulic hoses £374.45, now costs £608.34
- High pressure water hoses £206.03, now costs £320.08
- E-Force RTC equipment spreader £6398.00, now costs £7294.00

Other considerations regarding financial pressures is the amount of equipment that has either failed, broken during operational incidents or even lost.

### **4. Fire Engines and Specialist Vehicles**

**4.1.** There is much investment in GFRS Fleet over this coming year and beyond. These has been a great deal of work to create business plans and secure funding through MTFs bids in support of a vehicle replacement programme. Fire engines in GFRS have a life cycle of 15 years, 3 years above the national average, and are replaced on a rolling programme. Ordinarily this requires the purchase of two to three fire engines every year to maintain the replacement programme.

**4.2.** For a number of reasons the Service has not procured any new fire engines since 2018 and to overcome this it is necessary to purchase 10 in one tender process. This tender process is currently underway.

**4.3.** Capital funding of £3.6 million has been provided to cover the replacement of a total 10 fire engines.

**4.4.** In addition £2.4 million has been provided to replace a number of specialist vehicles that are at or over their intended lifecycle. These include a new Aerial Appliance, an Incident Command Unit, HIAB lifting vehicle, Officer Response vehicles, 4x4 vehicles and various EV combi vans. The vehicle specification for these vehicles is underway with the intention to purchase mid-2023.

- 4.5. A replacement BA support Van was ordered early 2022 and was fitted out within the Fleet Team and went live into service in the 2022. This vehicle is to attend at scene for BA equipment replacement and also to be used for equipment supply at station.
- 4.6. A new Community Safety Vehicle was ordered early 2022 and will be used by the Community Safety Team to deliver fire safety advice in the community. This vehicle will arrive mid-2023.
- 4.7. A MTFs bid was also secured to upgrade all stations power supply for fire engine and other vehicle charging, due to ageing and failures of the chargers for vehicles. This is to upgrade from 110v to 240v for all vehicles, and to install auto ejects onto all old and new vehicles that require it. This will ensure fewer charging issues for vehicles and less down time, and the auto ejects will speed up the deployment of vehicles rather than having to unplug the heavy leads. This project should commence later in 2023.
- 4.8. All fire stations have been assessed for EV Charge point's location with our approved EV infrastructure partner Connect Kerb. During 2023 EV charge points will be rolled out across fire stations to allow for a change over to EV vehicles, including the new EV Combi vans.
- 4.9. A trial to use Supplementary Solar on vehicles is underway and is part of the new specification for fire engines, specialist vehicles and large vans in 2023.

## **5. Procurement**

- 5.1. Procurement for GFRS equipment is undertaken in line with procurement rules that are nationally agreed and adopted by GCC/ GFRS. Depending on the values of the purchases will determine what agreed route is taken. Large procurements (above £177K) are supported by GCC Strategic Procurement unit. GFRS has a Senior Procurement Officer in post who advises and supports staff on methods and routes of procurement across the Community Safety Directorate.

## **6. Future Plan & Needs**

- 6.1. GFRS Logistics and Resources Head has agreed that he will produce and publish a GFRS Logistics & Resources 10 year Delivery Plan which will inform GFRS & GCC of the future requirements for equipment. This will enable better planning of procurements to achieve timelines for contracts and assist with future budgetary requirements.
- 6.2. GFRS Logistics and Resources are aware of the current pressures regarding the budgets it has and are intending to submit various MTFs bids to GCC to assist in keeping up with replacement of equipment and to move the service into a modern proactive service.



# **Appendix 1 –GFRS PPE Uniform**

# Cost of GFRS PPE

£2,079.48 per person



**Rescue Jacket**  
£273.90