LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-26-089

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Training

Report to:	**Date:**
Investment & Finance Board	24 September 2026
Commissioner's Board	7 October 2026
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board	20 October 2026

Report by:
Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Bracewell

Authorising Head of Service:
Assistant Commissioner Craig Carter

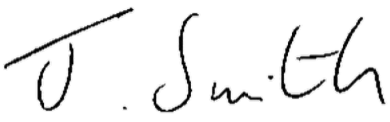
Report classification:
For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Integrity
Teamwork
Equity
Courage
Learning

I agree the recommended decision below.



Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date **This decision was remotely signed on 13 November 2026**

PART ONE
Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval for the procurement of dedicated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support recruit, continuation and specialist operational training. The requirement has arisen following the implementation of Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants, which has significantly increased the volume of PPE required for training activities and the time garments remain unavailable due to cleaning, decontamination, inspection and restoration processes. The Brigade's existing firefighter PPE contract was designed to support frontline operational activity and does not include dedicated training PPE provision at the scale now required.

Historically, training PPE has been provided through pooled stock arrangements managed by MSA Bristol and shared across a number of Fire and Rescue Services. In 2026, MSA Bristol advised that these arrangements would cease, requiring individual services to make their own provision for training PPE. The withdrawal of this arrangement, combined with increased demand from recruit training, continuation training, the Modern Firefighting Programme and the developing Licence to Operate framework, requires the Brigade to establish a sustainable solution to support ongoing training requirements.

The proposed approach is to procure dedicated training PPE through a direct award to MSA Bristol and incorporate the garments within the Brigade's existing managed PPE service. This will provide continuity of supply, ensure garments benefit from existing arrangements for laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement and logistics, and avoid the complexity and additional cost of establishing separate PPE management arrangements.

The proposal will improve the availability of training PPE, reduce the risk of disruption to mandatory operational training, and support delivery of the Modern Firefighting Programme and Licence to Operate framework. It will also provide a sustainable interim solution until training PPE requirements are incorporated within the Brigade's future firefighter PPE procurement strategy.

For the London Fire Commissioner

That the London Fire Commissioner approves expenditure up to the amount detailed in Part Two and the award of a contract to MSA Bristol through a direct award under YPO Framework 1204 PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing, for the provision of dedicated training PPE and associated managed services until 14 October 2028

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Brigade delivers recruit, continuation and specialist operational training to maintain firefighter competence and operational preparedness.

1.2 The implementation of Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants has fundamentally changed the way Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used during training is managed. PPE used during live fire training is treated as

single use for that training event and must be removed from circulation following exposure. Before it can be returned to service, the PPE must undergo prescribed cleaning, decontamination, inspection and restoration processes. These arrangements have significantly increased the time that PPE is unavailable for use and have created a requirement for additional PPE capacity to support training activity. Whilst operational frontline PPE is supported through a fully managed service that includes garment issue, laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement and logistics support, dedicated training PPE is not currently included within those arrangements. Consequently, maintaining adequate PPE availability for recruit, continuation and specialist operational training has become increasingly challenging and has substantially increased the volume of equipment required to sustain training delivery.

1.3 The current PPE contract with MSA Bristol was designed primarily to support frontline operational activities and did not include provision for dedicated training PPE at the scale now required. To support training delivery, MSA Bristol has historically supplied training PPE through pooled stock arrangements shared across a number of Fire and Rescue Services. This arrangement has enabled the Brigade to meet training requirements without maintaining dedicated training PPE stocks of its own. Earlier in 2026, MSA Bristol informed the Brigade that this arrangement would cease and that Fire and Rescue Services would be required to make their own provision for training PPE. As a result, the Brigade must now establish a sustainable arrangement to support its ongoing training requirements. The proposed approach is to procure dedicated training PPE and incorporate it within the existing managed service arrangements, ensuring continuity of supply, garment maintenance and logistical support whilst avoiding disruption to training delivery and providing a sustainable replacement for the previous pooled stock arrangement.

2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes

2.1 The objective of this proposal is to secure sufficient training PPE capacity to support the continued delivery of recruit, continuation and specialist operational training whilst maintaining compliance with Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants.

2.2 The proposed arrangements will provide dedicated training PPE that can be incorporated into the Brigade's existing managed PPE service. This will ensure garments benefit from established arrangements for laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement, logistics and asset management.

2.3 The proposal will improve the availability of training PPE and reduce the risk of disruption to recruit, continuation and specialist operational training caused by PPE shortages or extended turnaround times for cleaning and restoration.

2.4 The proposal will support delivery of the Modern Firefighting Programme and the Brigade's developing Licence to Operate framework by ensuring sufficient PPE capacity is available to meet current and forecast training demand.

2.5 The proposed approach will maintain a single integrated PPE service model, providing continuity of supply, clear accountability and effective lifecycle management whilst avoiding the operational complexity and additional costs associated with separate PPE management arrangements.

2.6 The proposal will provide a sustainable interim solution until training PPE requirements can be incorporated within the Brigade's future firefighter PPE procurement strategy.

3 Values Comments

Service

The proposal supports the continued delivery of recruit, continuation and specialist operational training by ensuring sufficient PPE is available to meet current and future demand. Maintaining training capacity will help ensure firefighters remain competent, operationally prepared and able to respond effectively to emergencies.

Integrity

The proposal is based on an evidenced operational requirement arising from the implementation of Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants, increased training demand and the withdrawal of the pooled training PPE arrangements previously provided by MSA Bristol. The recommendation provides a transparent and sustainable solution that ensures training PPE is managed to the same high standards as operational PPE.

Teamwork

The proposal supports collaboration across operational and training functions by ensuring PPE availability does not become a barrier to training delivery. Integrating training PPE within the existing managed service arrangements will provide consistent processes and a single service model across the Brigade.

Equity

The proposal will help ensure equitable access to recruit, continuation and specialist operational training by providing sufficient PPE capacity to support all personnel requiring training. This will reduce the risk of delays or cancellations that could affect individual development opportunities and workforce competence.

Courage

The proposal demonstrates a proactive response to the operational and logistical challenges arising from contamination management requirements and increasing training demand. It establishes a sustainable solution before the withdrawal of the existing pooled stock arrangements impacts training delivery.

Learning

The proposal reflects lessons learned from the implementation of Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants and the increasing pressures placed on PPE availability through training activities. It demonstrates the Brigade's commitment to adapting its arrangements to meet changing operational requirements whilst maintaining compliance, resilience and training effectiveness.

4 Equality Comments

4.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service are required to have due regard to thePublic Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.

4.2 It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, andafter the decision has been taken.

4.3 The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.

a. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions,to have due regard to the need to:

i. eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

ii. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

iii. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

b. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

i. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic.

ii. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.

iii. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

c. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

d. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

i. tackle prejudice

ii. promote understanding.

4.4 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when taking decisions. This requires consideration of the potential impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics and the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

4.5 The proposal relates to the provision of additional training PPE required to support existing operational training arrangements and does not change eligibility for training, operational roles or employment policies. The proposal is intended to ensure that all firefighters continue to have equitable access to recruit, continuation and specialist operational training by maintaining sufficient PPE availability to support training delivery.

4.6 The introduction of dedicated training PPE will reduce the risk of delays, cancellations or reduced training capacity arising from PPE shortages. This will help ensure personnel are able to access mandatory training opportunities consistently, irrespective of location, duty system or individual characteristics.

5 Other

Workforce comments

5.1 The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on operational staff by ensuring sufficient PPE is available to support recruit, continuation and specialist operational training. Maintaining adequate PPE availability will reduce the risk of training disruption and support the Brigade's ability to deliver mandatory training programmes, workforce competence requirements and the developing Licence to Operate framework.

5.2 The proposed approach will provide dedicated training PPE within the existing managed service arrangements, ensuring garments are subject to the same laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair and replacement processes as operational PPE. This will provide greater resilience, improve PPE availability and reduce reliance on temporary arrangements and supplier goodwill.

5.3 Failure to implement the proposal could result in training delays, reduced training capacity and disruption to recruit, continuation and specialist operational training activities. This may impact workforce competence, operational preparedness and the Brigade's ability to meet its statutory and operational requirements.

5.4 Representative Bodies and relevant stakeholders will continue to be engaged throughout implementation to ensure any workforce implications are identified and appropriately managed.

Sustainability comments

5.5 The proposal supports the Brigade's commitment to sustainable service delivery by making use of the existing managed PPE service arrangements rather than establishing a separate PPE management model. Incorporating training PPE within the current service will maximise the use of existing infrastructure, logistics, asset management and garment maintenance arrangements, reducing duplication of processes and resources.

5.6 The managed service model supports a circular approach to PPE management through the inspection, laundering, repair and refurbishment of garments throughout their operational life. This maximises garment utilisation, reduces waste and supports value for money by extending the useful life of PPE wherever it remains safe and appropriate to do so.

5.7 The proposal also supports operational resilience and adaptation to changing service demands by ensuring sufficient PPE is available to support ongoing training requirements whilst maintaining compliance with Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants. Providing dedicated training PPE will reduce reliance on temporary arrangements and support the sustainable delivery of recruit, continuation and specialist operational training.

5.8 Sustainability considerations, including garment durability, lifecycle management, repairability and end-of-life disposal arrangements, will continue to be managed through the existing contract management and supplier performance processes.

Procurement comments

5.9 The Brigade has identified a requirement to procure dedicated training Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support recruit, continuation and specialist operational training. The proposed procurement route is a direct award to MSA Bristol under the YPO Framework 1204 PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing, which expires on 31 August 2028.

5.10 The Brigade currently receives a fully managed firefighter PPE service from MSA Bristol. This service includes garment issue, laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement, logistics, stock management, asset tracking and management information reporting. All operational PPE is managed through a single integrated service model.

5.11 The dedicated training PPE is intended to support existing operational training arrangements and therefore needs to be fully incorporated into the current managed service model. Procuring the garments through an alternative supplier would require separate arrangements for laundering, decontamination, maintenance, repair, replacement and distribution, resulting in increased operational complexity, duplication of processes and additional contract management requirements.

5.12 A direct award to MSA Bristol will ensure that the training PPE can be seamlessly integrated into the existing managed service arrangements, maintaining a single point of accountability for issue, maintenance, decontamination, logistics and lifecycle management. This approach will also provide continuity of service following the withdrawal of the pooled stock arrangements previously used to support training PPE requirements and represents the most operationally efficient and cost-effective solution until the expiry of the current firefighter PPE contract on 14 October 2028.

5.13 The proposed approach avoids the operational disruption, implementation costs and service risks associated with introducing a separate PPE management arrangement during the remaining term of the current firefighter PPE contract. During this period, training PPE requirements will be reviewed and incorporated into the Brigade's future firefighter PPE procurement strategy.

Communications comments

5.14 If approved, a communications plan will be developed to support implementation of the additional training PPE arrangements. Communications will ensure that operational training staff, representative bodies and relevant stakeholders are informed of the rationale for the proposal, implementation timescales and any changes to PPE management arrangements.

5.15 Communication activity will focus on explaining how the additional PPE provision will support the continued delivery of recruit, continuation and specialist operational training, maintain compliance with Policy PN1000 Fire Contaminants and provide a sustainable replacement for the temporary training PPE arrangements previously supported through pooled stock.

5.16 No adverse communications implications have been identified. The proposal is expected to be positively received as it will improve training resilience, reduce the risk of training disruption and support the continued delivery of operational competence and workforce development programmes

6 Financial comments

Please see part 2

7 Legal Comments

7.1 Under Section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the Commissioner') is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.

7.2 Section 327D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, as amended, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

7.3 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters for which the Commissioner would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Fire (the Deputy Mayor'). In particular, paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above is identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...". The proposed expenditure exceeds this financial threshold, accordingly, prior approval from the Deputy Mayor will be sought.

7.4 The Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service may authorise the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure of up to the amount set out in part Two for the provision of dedicated training PPE and associated managed services until the expiry of the current firefighter PPE contract on 14 October 2028.

7.5 The London Fire Commissioner may approve expenditure up to the amount detailed in Part Two and the award of a contract to MSA Bristol through a direct award under YPO Framework 1204 PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing, for the provision of dedicated training PPE and associated managed services until 14 October 2028

7.6 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("FRSA 2004"). Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 20014 the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting and section 5A allows the Commissioner to procure personnel, services and equipment they consider appropriate for purposes incidental or indirectly incidental to their functional purposes.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	None	

Part two confidentiality

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a Part Two form: YES