LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-26-090

The Provision of an Additional Firefighter PPE Set

Report to:	**Date:**
Investment & Finance Board	24 September 2026
Commissioner's Board	07 October 2026
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board	20 October 2026
London Fire Commissioner	

Report by:
Jamie Jenkins - Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Central Operations

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 4 November 2026**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval to increase the standard firefighter PPE entitlement from two sets to three sets per firefighter through the provision of an additional hybrid PPE garment suitable for both rescue and wildfire firefighting incidents. This will offer a significantly enhanced level of protection at extreme heat related incidents from a health and safety perspective.

The proposal responds to increasing demand on the Brigade's PPE provision, including a significant increase in emergency PPE deliveries and growing operational pressures during periods of higher temperatures, severe weather and national resilience deployments. The additional PPE set will improve operational resilience, reduce reliance on emergency deliveries, and ensure firefighters continue to have access to clean and serviceable PPE.

Decisions

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner agrees that a contract be awarded 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 an additional hybrid firefighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) set and associated managed services for a period up to 14 October 2028, in accordance with the arrangements set out in Part Two of this report.

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial to finalise and enter into the necessary contractual arrangements.

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) currently contracts with MSA Bristol Uniforms Ltd for the provision of firefighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and associated managed services. The contract delivers a fully managed PPE service, including wearer measurement, garment issue, laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement, logistics, stock management, asset tracking and management information reporting. The service provides full lifecycle management and traceability of PPE, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements while supporting approximately 4,800 operational firefighters across the Brigade.

1.2 For the past eight years, each firefighter has been issued with two sets of PPE, supported by a weekly delivery service that supplies laundered PPE to every fire station across London.

1.3 In recent years, periods of higher temperatures and increased operational demand during the summer months have placed additional pressure on the current two-set PPE model. Consequently, the frequency of emergency PPE deliveries outside the standard weekly service has increased significantly. Reliance on ad hoc two-hour emergency deliveries is no longer considered a sustainable operating model and creates an ongoing risk to operational resilience.

1.4 On occasion, the unavailability of PPE has affected operational resilience and resulted in appliances being temporarily unavailable for deployment pending the delivery of replacement garments.

1.5 The increasing pressure on the current PPE model presents a particular risk during periods of heightened operational activity, including large-scale incidents and national resilience deployments. Over the summer months during 2026 which encountered record temperatures, heatwave and drought conditions, LFB has also deployed resources to major incidents in Greater Manchester, Derbyshire, Suffolk, Hampshire, Cambridgeshire, South Wales and the West Midlands, involving more than 50 fire engines and over 300 firefighters to provide support on a national scale. Maintaining sufficient stocks of clean, serviceable PPE is essential to support such deployments whilst ensuring operational cover is maintained across London.

1.6 From a London perspective, LFB experienced a particularly demanding summer period in 2026, resulting in significantly increased demand on the London Operations Centre (LOC). During July 2026, the LOC managed elevated levels of operational activity, including 108 water-related incidents, of which 30 involved rescues of persons from water, alongside 43 wildfire incidents. This heightened activity placed considerable pressure on operational resources, with daily emergency call volumes to LFB Control regularly exceeding 1,000 calls.

1.7 Across the month, LFB received a total of 27,580 calls from Londoners, representing an increase of more than 41% compared with the average number of calls received during July over the previous three years. This demand resulted in attendance at over 14,600 incidents and required the management of 164 incident escalations (make-ups), including 43 grass fire make-ups. These figures highlight the increasing operational challenges associated with periods of extreme weather and reinforce the importance of maintaining sufficient operational capacity, resilience, and equipment availability to meet LFB's statutory responsibilities and protect the communities of London.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The objective of this proposal is to increase the standard core firefighter PPE entitlement from two sets to three sets per firefighter. This will improve the resilience of the Brigade's PPE provision by ensuring firefighters have continued access to clean and serviceable PPE during periods of increased operational activity, extreme weather events, higher temperatures and national resilience deployments. The provision of this significantly enhanced level of protection through the supply of hybrid PPE will improve firefighter resilience and operational effectiveness, particularly during extreme heat and wildfire-related incidents, which are expected to increase in frequency and duration. The additional hybrid PPE will enhance firefighter health, safety and wellbeing by providing a garment specifically designed for use in high-temperature

environments, helping to reduce heat stress and physical fatigue during prolonged incidents whilst maintaining the required levels of protection.

2.2 The additional PPE set will consist of hybrid PPE set that is suitable for rescue and wildfire incidents. This will increase overall PPE availability across the Brigade whilst providing greater flexibility to respond to wildfire incidents without reducing the availability of PPE for business-as-usual operational activity.

2.3 The proposal will improve operational availability and minimise the risk of appliances becoming temporarily unavailable due to the absence of suitable PPE, ensuring firefighters can maintain operational readiness whilst continuing to undertake their duties safely.

2.4 The proposal will provide greater assurance that the Brigade can maintain operational resilience, protect firefighters' safety and wellbeing, and continue to meet its statutory responsibilities while responding to incidents both within London and as part of national mutual aid arrangements.

2.5 Increasing PPE holdings represents a prudent and proactive investment in the Brigade's frontline capability, ensuring sufficient stocks of clean and serviceable PPE are available to support service continuity and the increasing operational challenges associated with severe weather and climate-related incidents.

2.6 The need to increase PPE holdings is supported by both current operational experience and emerging climate forecasts. The Brigade has experienced a significant increase in emergency PPE deliveries in recent years, demonstrating growing pressure on the existing two-set PPE model. This trend is expected to continue as periods of higher temperatures and severe weather events place additional demands on operational resources. The Met Office has identified the current El Niño event as potentially unprecedented and has indicated that 2027 is likely to be among the warmest years on record globally, whilst also increasing the likelihood of wetter and stormier conditions across the UK and Northwest Europe. These forecasts indicate a heightened risk of prolonged incidents, flooding, wildfires, and other weather-related emergencies, reinforcing the need for more resilient PPE provision.

3 Values Comments

Service

The proposal supports frontline firefighters by ensuring they have continued access to clean and serviceable PPE, improving operational readiness, and the Brigade's ability to respond effectively to emergencies. It helps maintain service continuity during periods of increased operational demand.

Integrity

The proposal is based on evidenced operational need, including increased emergency PPE deliveries and growing pressures on the current two-set PPE model. The recommendation

represents a transparent and proactive approach to managing operational risk and protecting firefighter safety.

Teamwork

The proposal supports operational personnel across the Brigade by ensuring sufficient PPE is available to enable crews to work safely and effectively together during routine operations, major incidents and national resilience deployments.

Equity

Providing a third PPE set to firefighters ensures consistent access to appropriate PPE across the operational workforce, supporting the welfare and safety needs of all personnel regardless of location or duty system.

Courage

The proposal demonstrates a proactive response to emerging operational challenges, including increased demand associated with severe weather, wildfire incidents and climate-related risks, ensuring the Brigade remains prepared for future pressures.

Learning

The proposal reflects lessons learned from the 2022 Major Incident Review (extreme weather) and from recent operational experience which includes deployment to support National Resilience resourced Wildfire Major Incidents, in heat wave conditions. This proposal includes consideration for the significant increase in emergency PPE deliveries and the growing demands placed on the current PPE provision model. It demonstrates the Brigade's commitment to adapting and improving service delivery based on evidence and experience.

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 the Public 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, and after 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.

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

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.5 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:

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

4.6 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.

4.7 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:

- tackle prejudice
- promote understanding.

4.8 The proposal to procure an additional hybrid PPE garment is via the continuation of an existing service with no material change to scope or service delivery. The Equality Impact Assessment used as part of the recent LFC decision to extend that contractual arrangement to October 2028 therefore remains applicable and no further assessment is required at this time.

5 Other

Workforce comments

5.1 The proposal will have a positive impact on operational staff by increasing the availability of clean and serviceable PPE and reducing delays associated with emergency PPE deliveries. The introduction of a third PPE set is expected to improve firefighter welfare, comfort and operational readiness, particularly during periods of sustained operational activity and extreme weather. Trade Union consultation is a critical success factor and will continue and progress productively at all appropriate times.

Sustainability comments

5.2 The proposal supports the Brigade's climate adaptation objectives by improving resilience to the increasing operational impacts associated with severe weather, wildfires and extreme temperatures. The use of a hybrid PPE garment will maximise operational flexibility and reduce the need for separate specialist wildfire garments. Consideration will continue to be given to garment durability, repairability and end-of-life

management as part of the contract arrangements.

Procurement comments

5.3 The Brigade has identified a requirement to procure an additional hybrid PPE garment that is suitable for both rescue firefighting and wildfire incidents. The proposed procurement route is a direct award under YPO Framework 1204 PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing, which expires on 31 August 2028.

5.4 The Brigade currently receives a fully managed firefighter PPE service from MSA Bristol Uniforms Ltd. This service includes garment issue, laundering, decontamination, inspection, repair, replacement, logistics, stock management, asset tracking and management information reporting. The current firefighter PPE contract is due to expire in October 2028, and all operational PPE is managed through a single integrated service model.

5.5 The additional hybrid PPE garments are intended to supplement the Brigade's existing core firefighter PPE provision and therefore need to be fully incorporated into the current managed service arrangements for the remainder of the contract term. Procuring the garments from an alternative supplier would either require separate arrangements for laundering, maintenance, repair, replacement and distribution, or the operation of parallel service models. This would increase operational complexity, duplicate processes, and introduce additional risks relating to PPE availability, asset management, and garment traceability.

5.6 A direct award to Bristol Uniforms Ltd will ensure that the additional hybrid garments can be seamlessly integrated into the existing managed service, maintaining a single point of accountability for issue, maintenance, decontamination, logistics and lifecycle management. It will also remove the need for a sizing exercise, as the supplier already holds the relevant firefighter sizing information. This approach supports operational resilience, provides continuity of service for firefighters and represents the most effective means of delivering the Brigade's requirement up to the expiry of the current firefighter PPE contract in October 2028.

Communications comments

5.7 If approved, a communications plan will be implemented to inform operational staff, station-based personnel, representative bodies and relevant support functions of the proposed changes. Communications will explain the rationale for the additional PPE entitlement, implementation timescales and any changes to PPE management arrangements. Information will be provided through routine management channels, operational bulletins, intranet updates, and stakeholder briefings as appropriate.

6 Financial comments

6.1 This report is requesting the authority to spend in financial years 2027/28 and 2028/29 for the provision of an additional set of PPE for firefighters under the current PPE contract.

6.2 This purchase of an additional PPE is contingent upon funding being received from Central Government and no budget cover currently exists for this.

6.3 The expected expenditure across financial years 2027/28 and 2028/29 is set out in Part 2 of this report.

6.4 As the quoted price by the current supplier will be under the same integrated service arrangements as the existing PPE contract (and is inclusive of maintenance, repair and lifecycle management costs), there are no further incremental costs in addition to the quoted price that are anticipated with this purchase.

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 for the provision of an additional hybrid firefighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) set and associated managed services through a direct award under YPO Framework 1204 PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing, for a period up to 14 October 2028. 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 agree that a contract be awarded 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 an additional hybrid firefighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) set and associated managed services for a period up to 14 October 2028, in accordance with the arrangements set out in Part Two of this report.

7.6 The London Fire Commissioner may agree to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial to formalise and enter into the necessary contractual arrangements (under Part 4 of the LFC Scheme of Governance).

7.7 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.

7.8 The report confirms that the proposed procurement route to procure an additional PPE garment is a direct award to MSA\ Bristol Uniforms Ltd under the YPO Framework 1204PPE, Workwear, Uniform and Managed Services, Lot 3 Fire Protective and Rescue Clothing. Paragraph 5.6 of the report states that the direct award to MSA Bristol\Bristol Uniforms Ltd will ensure that the 'additional hybrid garments can be seamlessly integrated into the existing managed service, maintaining a single point of accountability for issue, maintenance, decontamination, logistics and lifecycle management'. Accordingly, the conditions set out in Schedule 5, paragraph 6 of the Procurement Act 2023 are satisfied, namely, that due to an absence of competition for technical reasons, only the incumbent supplier can provide the additional hybrid garment that meets LFC's requirements for full technical alignment with the existing operational PPE and that there are no reasonable alternatives capable of delivering the required level of interoperability, safety assurance and lifestyle management. The justification for making a direct award to MSA/ Bristol Uniforms Ltd is satisfied and the risk of a procurement challenge is considered to be low.

7.9

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