Report to: Cabinet Member-Corporate Services and Performance  Date of Report: 15 February 2013  
Date of Decision: 26 February 2013

Subject: Home Office Funding Bid  
Report of: Head of Corporate Finance and ICT  Wards Affected: All

Is this a Key Decision? No  Is it included in the Forward Plan? No

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To request permission for the purchase (with subsequent reimbursement from the Home Office) of two Nutwell Body Storage Systems primarily to support Merseyside’s emergency mortuary arrangements at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital (RLUH), but which can also be utilised by other North West region Local Resilience Forums. (Sefton Council is the lead authority for mass fatality emergency planning.)

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member agrees to:

- Note the recent successful Home Office funding bid.
- Approve the purchase of the relevant equipment and the subsequent reimbursement from the Home Office.

How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Objectives?

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<tr>
<th>Corporate Objective</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Neutral Impact</th>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Creating a Learning Community</td>
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<td>2 Jobs and Prosperity</td>
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<td>3 Environmental Sustainability</td>
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<td>4 Health and Well-Being</td>
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<td>5 Children and Young People</td>
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<td>6 Creating Safe Communities</td>
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<td>7 Creating Inclusive Communities</td>
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<td>8 Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy</td>
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Reasons for the Recommendation:

Local Authorities have a Mass Fatalities Plan that would be initiated in time of a major incident which resulted in an excessive number of deaths. Sefton are lead authority as part of the Merseyside Resilience Forum on Mass Fatalities. The Home Office provides grant funding that local authorities can bid for to support this service. In order to enable Merseyside local authorities to enhance emergency mortuary capacity the Merseyside Resilience Forum submitted a bid for grant monies to procure temporary Body Storage facilities. Sefton as lead authority undertook the procurement on behalf of the Merseyside Resilience Forum. The decision was required in order to gain approval to support the Home Office Funding Bid and to enable Sefton to procure on behalf of all Merseyside authorities.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The equipment will cost £30,259 and is fully funded by the Home Office Grant.

(B) Capital Costs

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>None</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Equality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No Equality Implication</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated</td>
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<td>3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains</td>
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Impact on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD.2123/13) and the Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1439/13) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.
Are there any other options available for consideration?

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet Member decisions.

Contact Officer:  Margaret Rawding
Tel:  0151 934 4082
Email:  margaret.rawding@sefton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.
1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2012, Local Resilience Forums (LRF) across the UK were invited to apply for Home Office Funding in order to enhance local area mortuary capability and to indicate how this contributes to increasing national mass fatalities resilience. The target date for submission was 30 November 2012.

1.2 As Sefton Council chairs the Merseyside Mass Fatalities (MF) Group, Ros Gatehouse (Sefton) on behalf of Merseyside LRF applied for funding to support the purchase of two Nutwell Body Storage Systems primarily to support Merseyside’s emergency mortuary arrangements at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital (RLUH) but which can also be utilised by other North West region LRFs.

1.3 In January 2013, the Home Office confirmed that the funding bid was successful and Merseyside LRF would receive £30,259 in order to purchase two Nutwell Storage systems, which include the basic storage cubes, chiller units and body trays which is essentially what is required for deployment.

1.4 The Home Office has negotiated the prices direct with the supplier and has ensured that delivery and training costs are waived. However, it has stated that the purchase must occur locally and that it will reimburse the full cost of £30,259 on the production of relevant invoices.

1.5 The Home Office will not make payments in advance of actual spend and the funding must be reimbursed before 31 March, or else no reimbursement will occur.

1.6 The funding is specifically for the purpose of enhancing mortuary facilities in the event of a mass fatalities incident.

1.7 The Nutwell system is available to all local and central government departments through the NHS Framework Agreement without need for OJEU advertising.

2 Background

2.1 As per the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities have the responsibility to provide a temporary mortuary following an incident, where there are up to two hundred fatalities.

2.2 Beyond those numbers, national arrangements could be triggered by the Coroner and the cost for such arrangements rests with the local authority in whose area the incident has occurred. It is estimated that a three month operation to manage between 300 and 600 fatalities following an incident could create costs of approximately £7 - 10 million.

2.3 The current contracts are with ‘KBR’ who facilitate the National Arrangements within a local authority area and with ‘Kenyons’ who offer a suite of options including structures, equipment and trained personnel.
2.4 A successful Home Office bid in the latter part of 2011 funded alterations and enhancements at the RLUH mortuary, ensuring that the death process including post mortem examinations could be efficiently managed on a variable scale. Plans for co-operation between Merseyside mortuaries would allow this plan to be implemented without disruption to normal routine mortuary business.

2.5 In October 2011, the RLUH formally agreed to allow the mortuary to be used to manage the death process following a mass fatalities incident.

3 2012 Funding Bid

3.1 The request for funding was to enable the purchase of two Nutwell Body Storage systems, which together hold 24 bodies, specified for deployment at any feasible location within Merseyside, including at the scene of an incident to support Merseyside Police in the body recovery phase.

3.2 This would be a valuable enhancement of capability to support the body recovery process with the provision of an efficient and dignified refrigerated storage option. Provision of two systems would allow flexibility to deal with a significant incident or with separate incident sites.

3.3 The availability of these two systems also means that, should use of the Royal Liverpool facilities be considered by other LRFs in the region, or become necessary for an incident outside Merseyside; there is an option to provide the means of refrigerating bodies at or close to a distant scene, pending removal to Liverpool.

4 Cost Efficiencies

4.1 Following completion of the Merseyside Mass Fatalities Plan, subsequent agreements with the RLUH, and the benefit of two successful Home Office funding bids, Merseyside has significant capacity to manage incidents involving up to 68 fatalities without utilising RLUH fridge space or activating any external contracts.

4.2 For incidents that involve greater numbers, capability exists within current capacity and activation of the Kenyons contact to manage fatalities up to approximately 400, twice the number as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act for local authorities’ responsibility.

4.3 This provides the necessary assurance to Merseyside local authorities and the Coroners that inordinately expensive national arrangements via the KBR contract are significantly less likely to be activated.