



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Record of an Authority decision delegated to an Officer as required under Regulation 7 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014

Subject of decision	This documents the decision award/continue a contract directly to Rescue 3 for the provision of our Training Provider for Water Rescue, Rope Rescue and Boat Operations without inviting competitive tenders, pursuant to paragraph 3.1g of the Authority's Contracts Standing Orders. The Authority sets out a requirement to seek approval prior to the commitment of expenditure (capital or revenue) of in accordance with the Contract Standing Orders to ensure the following objects are adhered to: • Achieve best value for money • Be consistent with the highest standards of integrity • Ensure fairness and transparency • Comply with all legal requirements • Support the Fire Authority's corporate aims and policies A review of the arrangement was conducted to assess whether to continue with the existing supplier or explore alternatives, considering factors such as service quality, cost, and fitness for purpose; location/accessibility.
Officer name	Lee Watson
Job title	Area Commander Response
Date decision taken	19 th June 2026
Reasons for the decision	Rescue 3 (international accrediting and standard setting body) for Water Rescue, Rope Rescue and Boat Operations have provided the Authority with training for several years and has met performance expectations and delivered a high-quality service promoting best practice. Rescue 3 training programmes align with the NFCC Boat Code and national operational guidance, ensuring ongoing compliance. Any change in provider would require extensive validation to confirm equivalence, introducing avoidable compliance and assurance risks. Retaining Rescue 3 ensures compliance, assurance risk, operational continuity, workforce competence, and value for money. This decision is therefore considered proportionate and evidence based. Factors that contributed to making this informed decision can be summarised as:- <u>Financial Impact and Value for Money</u> Transitioning to a new provider would incur significant one-off costs, estimated between £77,000 and £230,000+, including:

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	• Retraining of operational personnel • Instructor requalification • Abstraction costs (loss of operational availability) • Administrative and system transition There is no demonstrable evidence that alternative providers would deliver sufficient financial benefit to offset these costs. Retaining Rescue 3 represents prudent financial stewardship of public funds. <u>Competence Management and Data Integrity</u> Rescue 3 provides a centralised competency management and certification system, supporting: • Audit and inspection requirements • Competence tracking and revalidation • Operational assurance Moving to another provider would risk loss of data continuity, increased administrative burden, and gaps in competency verification. <u>Workforce Capability and Training Continuity</u> All instructors and operational staff are currently trained under Rescue 3 methodologies. Transition would require: • Extensive retraining or qualification mapping, • Reduced instructional capacity, • Potential short-term reduction in operational readiness. Retention ensures continuity of capability and a stable training environment. <u>Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement</u> Rescue 3 provides ongoing quality assurance, safety updates, and technical guidance, ensuring training remains current and aligned with national and international learning. This structured approach reduces risk and supports continuous improvement. <u>Interoperability and Multi-Agency Working</u> Rescue 3 is widely adopted across Fire and Rescue Services and partner agencies, supporting: • Common techniques and terminology • Effective interoperability at incidents • Confidence in mutual aid situations Changing provider may introduce inconsistency and reduce effectiveness during joint operations. <u>Procurement and Contractual Considerations</u> A change of provider would require a full procurement process, incurring time, cost, and resource implications. Where existing contractual arrangements or frameworks apply, retaining Rescue 3 ensures compliance without disruption. <u>Infrastructure, Equipment and System Alignment</u>
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	Existing equipment, training packages, and operational procedures are aligned with Rescue 3 methodologies. A change in provider may necessitate: • Equipment changes or upgrades • Adjustments to operational procedures • Additional capital investment This introduces both financial burden and operational inconsistency. <u>Performance, Stability and Change Risk</u> There is no identified performance deficiency with Rescue 3. Replacing an effective and compliant provider without clear benefit introduces unnecessary: • Operational risk • Financial exposure • Organisational disruption Maintaining stability is consistent with good governance and risk management principles. <u>Time, Opportunity Cost and Organisational Focus</u> Transitioning providers would require significant planning, coordination, and implementation effort. This would divert resources from: • Operational preparedness • Core service delivery • Risk-critical activities The opportunity cost of change is therefore significant and unjustified. <u>Reputational and Assurance Considerations</u> Retaining a widely recognised provider supports: • Confidence during audit, inspection, and external review • Defensibility in the event of operational incidents • Organisational credibility Changing provider without strong justification may expose the Authority to reputational and scrutiny risk. <u>Resilience and Business Continuity</u> Retaining Rescue 3 ensures: • Continuity of training delivery • No disruption to competency maintenance cycles • Sustained operational resilience A transition would introduce avoidable disruption and risk to service continuity. Stakeholders of the system have been part of the review and decision
Details of decision	The decision to continue with Rescue 3 delivers optimal value for money, operational efficiency, minimal disruption to the service and

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	alignment with organisational needs. This rationale will be retained for audit purposes. The service's estimated annual requirement is: • SFRBO Initial Training: Up to 6 delegates per year • SFRBO Recertification Training: Up to 18 delegates per year Currently, annual spend is approximately £55,518 Water Rescue and Boat Operations £52,318 Rope Rescue £3,200 However, the actual value will be dependent on number of delegates/courses each year. The training costs are included within the revenue budget and will be reviewed each year as part of the budget process. The contract will continue on the same arrangements and will be reviewed on an annual basis each June ensuring value for money. Which will then be automatically renewed in 12 month increments unless terminated before.
Details of alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	To run an open tender process for an alternative supplier has been discounted due to its unlikelihood that alternative providers would provide the service for less than the amount we are able to validate and the high risk of service disruption during transition. Alternative providers are typically more limited in scope, less widely recognised, or focused on niche delivery areas. Many do not offer: • Fully integrated water, rope, and boat training • Equivalent assurance systems or technical updates • Comparable national recognition Waiving the Contract Standing Orders for this contract would allow work to progress; reduced disruption to operations whilst a maintain service delivery and expected levels of expenditure.
Any interests declared by a Member or Officer	No interests known or declared.
Links to relevant background documents or information	NFCC Boat Code

Signed



Date 13/07/26

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