

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE AND RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD193

Title: Operational Equipment Management System

Executive summary:

This report requests the approval of the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience to authorise the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to commit revenue expenditure up to £494,000 over seven years, inclusive of all project, resourcing and contract costs as set out in part two of the report, for the purposes of procuring an equipment management system and associated hardware.

The procurement of a new equipment management system will enable the London Fire Brigade to manage its operational equipment more effectively and efficiently. This will result in the mitigation of significant health and safety risks, more efficient maintenance processes and the replacement of redundant existing systems. It is anticipated that the new system could enable a reduction in the equipment budget, logistics costs and vehicle mileage.

The LFC Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the LFC to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before “[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...”.

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure of up to £494,000 over seven years for the purposes of procuring, and meeting the running costs of, an equipment management system and associated hardware.

Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

27 March 2023

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Report LFC-23-006y to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) explains that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) operates in excess of 127,000 pieces of operational and training equipment. These are stowed onto their emergency response vehicles and used in stations. The scope of the proposals within this paper covers these items.
- 1.2 It has been identified that the methodologies, policies and practices currently employed to manage these items are disparate and need modernisation. They are also significantly behind practices employed by other emergency services and fire and rescue services (FRSs).
- 1.3 The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) report '*Thematic Review of Operational Equipment – June 2021*' highlighted significant safety concerns, having identified weaknesses in LFB's assurance process for equipment on the run at the time of the review. The challenges have been detailed in two internal reviews following the MPOAC report: the '*Appliances and Inventories Thematic Review - 2020*', and the '*PEG Database report – 2022*'. The reports highlighted ineffective safety controls including concerns regarding LFB's ability to track, trace, and confirm the operational readiness for equipment across LFB. The inefficiency of operating multiple systems to order and deliver equipment have also been highlighted.
- 1.4 It has also been identified that the existing software used to manage some of the equipment at LFB's Operational Support Centre (OSC) is significantly outdated. Microsoft no longer supports the software; should an issue arise with the programme it may be unrecoverable, resulting in the loss of records and information relating to the equipment.
- 1.5 Officers from LFB's Technical Service Support team (TSS) have further expanded on the recommendations of these reports to review equipment management holistically and include the logistical arrangements of delivering, collecting, and storing equipment, alongside consumables delivered to station. The business case for this project has identified that significant efficiencies can be made in these areas to minimise van mileage along with appliance mileage, and as a result of this efficiency improvement reduce the ability for stations to stockpile equipment. Additionally, the process of taking inventories has also been identified as an area of potential improvement, currently, inventories for pumping appliances can take up to an hour. It is estimated that through the implementation of the proposed solution this could be reduced to half an hour.
- 1.6 Officers from TSS have been in contact with the London Ambulance Service (LAS), Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service to understand the possible solutions to these issues and learn from the development that these organisations have undertaken.
- 1.7 As an immediate action, officers from TSS have worked with officers from LFB's Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) department to develop an application in-house, on which all inventories can be taken at the start of each shift. This allows firefighters to undertake the inventory using the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) device from the rear of the appliance, meaning that they can carry the device with them as they undertake the inventory and immediately log their results rather than using paper and relying on double keying of information. This reduces the risk of manual error and on average saves fifteen minutes per inventory.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 It is proposed that a new equipment management system and associated hardware be procured, with the aim of mitigating the safety risks identified, and to bring LFB's practices in line with

those of other emergency services and FRSs.

- 2.2 The proposed system will tag operational equipment in a way that allows for automated scanning using a handheld device. The hardware will be supported by new software, which will identify each piece of equipment by its tag and automatically update the system to confirm its current location. The proposed solution could be expandable in future phases to cover additional requirements by tagging additional items as required. It will mirror the inventory management system that is developed by other emergency services and other public bodies.
- 2.3 The new software will become the single source of input and output with regard to equipment management. This method will require all items of equipment to have a unique identity, enabling it to be tracked and traced effectively and the maintenance records of the equipment to live alongside the identity. This works to close the significant health and safety risks of the current systems in place. Firefighters will be able to raise defects, report missing items and track maintenance requests through the system. By moving to a system that allows the firefighters to order equipment to demand, the Operational Support Group (OSG) function will be able to move to a methodology of delivering items to stations as required rather than the current practice which is to send a van to every fire station daily to check if anything is needed. This could significantly reduce the number of miles and time required to operate the day van service.
- 2.4 The system will also monitor stock in LFB's warehouse to manage stock levels and deliveries to stations as needed. Currently, this process is also manually operated and is inefficient for the staff members involved.
- 2.5 The project will be supported by temporary additional resource within the TSS team through internal secondment. The associated cost for which is accounted for in part two of this report.

Project milestones

- 2.5.1 LFB anticipates that the project will work to the milestones set out in the table below, subject to agreement with project stakeholders and the preferred supplier once selected through competitive tender.

Table 1: Project milestones

Milestone	Date
Specification started	January 2023
Specifications complete	March 2023
Tender design complete	April 2023
Tender complete	June 2023
Contract Award	July 2023
Roll out commences	October 2023
Roll out complete	March 2024

Budget

- 2.7 The project will be funded from the operational equipment budget within the TSS department, as the system will be utilised to manage operational equipment and the related processes of the equipment across LFB. The ongoing expenditure relating to subscription fees and servicing will be met by this budget going forward.
- 2.8 The estimated investment required to complete the project and operate the proposed system is £494,000 over an initial contract period of five years with an optional two year extension. A breakdown of the costings is provided in part two of this report. The estimated costs have been calculated through the use of a three-point cost calculation methodology. The figures used within the calculation were influenced by discussion of project spend recently incurred by other emergency services to complete similar implementations.

Options

- 2.9 In considering the investment required, officers from the TSS team explored five options: retain the existing system and continue, update the existing access based databases for the OSC, implement only a new software package to replace access, implement the new software package and associated hardware including asset tagging, and implement the software and hardware with a reduced level of asset tagging. Having reviewed the options available it was concluded that the most effective option, that would result in the best mitigation of safety risks, and most efficient operation of LFB equipment, was the option to implement a full equipment management system with full asset tagging. The proposed solution will result in the ability for the LFB to deliver the greatest level of efficiency and subsequent savings.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.

3.8 The implementation of the proposed system will require consideration from the suppliers with regard to accessibility relating to the use of computers, display screens and ICT infrastructure to ensure that the system can be operated by people who share a protected characteristic. This will be considered within the specification, tender and solution.

4. Other considerations

Workforce comments

4.1 LFB will consult with representative bodies as required to consider the impacts of policy change and the implementation of the proposed system. Representation from LFB Operations will be included within the project board alongside dedicated project resource support.

Sustainability comments

4.2 The recommended solution will require the procurement of ICT hardware. This category of procurement has the potential for harm to both the environment through the use of rare materials and also to individuals in the form of modern slavery in the production of the equipment required.

4.3 The specification and tender documentation will outline the safeguards and standards that the LFC expects suppliers to adhere to in removing these harms from their supply chain, the tender returns will be scored against their satisfaction of these requirements.

4.4 Additionally, this project will support the reduction of waste in the operational equipment category and significantly reduce mileage for both appliances and the day van service resulting in improvements towards LFB's carbon zero targets.

4.5 Where new policies and/or corporate projects arise, they are subject to LFB's sustainable development impact assessment process.

Conflicts of interest

4.6 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

5.1 This report requests approval for LFC to commit expenditure on the procurement and implementation of an equipment management system within a budget of £494,000 as detailed in part two of this report.

5.2 Funding will be met from existing LFB budget and there are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

6. Legal comments

6.1 This report seeks approval of expenditure for the procurement and contract of a new equipment management system set out in more detail in this report and Part 2.

6.2 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, 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.

- 6.3 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the LFC would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor"). Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of that direction requires the LFC to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...". Accordingly, the expenditure identified for the new equipment management system, set out in more detail in Part 2, requires prior approval.
- 6.4 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report and the ECIP is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("FRSA 2004"). Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 2014 the LFC 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 LFC to procure personnel, services and equipment they consider appropriate for purposes incidental or indirectly incidental to their functional purposes.
- 6.5 The proposed tender must be carried out in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") and the LFC's Scheme of Governance (Part 3 Standing Orders Relating To Procurement).
- 6.6 These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC's General Counsel Department in report LFC23-006 to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 - Part 2 of DMFD193

Appendix 2 - Part 1 of report LFC-23-006y to the London Fire Commissioner

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – YES

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer

Richard Berry has drafted this report with input from the LFC and in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

Niran Mothada has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience for approval.

✓

Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 27 March 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:**Date:**

27 March 2023

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