

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2622

Title: Procurement of IT for the Mayor's mobility schemes 2023-25

Executive summary:

This paper seeks approval to procure IT hosting, support and development for the Mayor's housing mobility schemes – Seaside & Country Homes and Housing Moves - from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 at a maximum cost of up to £50,000. Current contractual arrangements come to an end on 31 March 2023. The reprocurement will enable the continuation of these two schemes. There is a compelling case for them to continue. For example, Housing Moves will be the mechanism through which victims/survivors of domestic abuse and former rough sleepers can register and bid for properties (approved through MD2951) and the GLA is in contract with all but one of the London boroughs to administer Seaside & Country Homes.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves:

- the allocation of funding (from Seaside & Country Homes income) for expenditure of up to £50,000 on IT hosting, support and development services required for the Mayor's mobility schemes in 2023/24 and 2024/25
- the procurement via the GCloud process of Home Connections to undertake webhosting and IT support services under a contract with an initial period of two years (commencing on 1st April 2023) and including an option for two 12 month extensions, for which further GLA approval will be required.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Tim Steer

Position: Executive Director, Housing and Land

Signature:



Date:

14/02/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 **Housing Moves**, launched in May 2012, is the Mayor's scheme to enable existing housing association and council tenants in London move from one borough to another (approved through MD522). The scheme was refocussed in July 2022 to prioritise victims/survivors of domestic abuse and former rough sleepers rather than social tenants more widely (approved through MD2951).
- 1.2 Housing Moves is now providing a valued source of accommodation for the above groups. A total of 116 domestic abuse survivors are currently registered, with 69 moves achieved between October 2019 and December 2022 and 203 former rough sleepers (residents of Clearing House properties) are currently registered, with 130 moves between May 2019 and December 2022.
- 1.3 **Seaside & Country Homes** (SCH) enables older social tenants to move out of the capital, freeing up between 150 and 200 family sized homes each year which can then be used by social landlords to house Londoners in need. The scheme creates significant financial savings for London boroughs, and it provides a positive and popular housing option to older Londoners. It was established in 1968 and the Mayor brought it into the GLA (from the Department of Communities and Local Government) in 2011, saving the scheme from threatened closure (approved through MD558). Since 1 April 2013, SCH has been funded by the London boroughs on a fee-per-letting basis (approved through MD1070).
- 1.4 Both schemes are underpinned by an IT system, the functionality of which includes the following:
 - online customer applications (both schemes)
 - property advertisements and bidding (Housing Moves only)
 - the anonymisation of domestic abuse applicants (Housing Moves only)
 - the matching of applicants to properties (SCH only)
 - reporting and monitoring tools (both schemes).
- 1.5 The IT for Housing Moves and, subsequently, SCH was developed by Home Connections and is a much-enhanced version of their off-the-shelf choice-based lettings system. Home Connections has also provided the hosting and IT support for both schemes. Initial IT development, hosting and support costs for each scheme were approved through MD552 and DD851 respectively. The initial IT development and support for Housing Moves was procured through a competitive process, with the addition of SCH undertaken as a variation to the original contract. The contract was renewed on 1 April 2018 as a single source repurchase through the resellers framework (approved through MD2209). We have also extended the contract for two additional years as allowed within that contract with the extensions being approved through DD2521
- 1.6 Current contractual arrangements for hosting, support and IT development come to an end on 31 March 2023. There are compelling reasons for continuing both schemes beyond this point:
 - they are both strategically important to London and play, or will play, a key role in assisting to meet current mayoral priorities
 - they assist in delivering Mayoral priorities, specifically in relation to:

- tackling rough sleeping, including by freeing up much-needed accommodation with support for rough sleepers ready to move on from hostels or other services
- supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse
- facilitating mobility and tackling under-occupation, particularly for older Londoners through Seaside & Country Homes.
- There is overwhelming support from London's boroughs and housing associations for both schemes. All boroughs, except one, participate in (and fund) SCH. In addition, over 60 housing associations support applications to Seaside & Country Homes and the G15 also contribute properties to Housing Moves.
- There is a high level of demand from Londoners for Seaside & Country Homes, with around 3,000 applicants currently registered for SCH and record numbers of new applications in the last three years.
- The refocussed Housing Moves is providing valuable additional housing options for domestic abuse survivors and for residents of Clearing House ready to move on to independent living.

1.7 TfL procurement have advised that the service is procured using the GCloud procurement process, Home Connections are registered on the GCloud database for the services that we are seeking to reprocur. The current contract was procured through the resellers framework which includes a 2 per cent additional fee for the reseller element. Using the GCloud option will eliminate this mark-up, therefore providing better value for money than the current arrangements.

1.8 The estimated cost breakdown for the first two contracted years for support, hosting and IT development across the two schemes is as follows:

	2023-24	2024-25	Total
IT hosting and support	£19,121.90	£19,504.35	£38,626.25
IT development	£7,500	£3,500	£11,000.00
Total	£26,621.90	£23,004.35	£49,626.25

1.9 The bulk of the Housing Moves IT development has already been completed. However, there could be a need for additional relatively minor changes in 2023-24 and 2024-25, for example the inclusion of new referral sources and processes for Housing Moves domestic abuse and Clearing House application pathways.

1.10 It is proposed that the new contract will be for the provision of hosting and support at a fixed cost, with the option for IT development if, as and when specified by the GLA up to a maximum cost. Expenditure on development will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. As part of the new contract, GLA officers will seek to negotiate a number of upgrades to the system as necessary at a reduced cost or by specifying development in batches to improve efficiency.

1.11 The procurement needs to proceed as soon as possible, to provide certainty around the continuation of both schemes beyond 31 March 2023. This is needed because:

- boroughs have already been invited to purchase a maximum number of lettings for SCH during 2023/24 and addendums to the SCH contracts between each borough and the GLA are already being issued

- the Housing Mobility team are already advising G15 landlord how many properties they will need to contribute to Housing Moves in 2023-24.

1.12 It would not be prudent either to devote further resources to IT development, or to enter into contractual arrangements with the boroughs, in the absence of certainty around the continued provision of IT for both schemes.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The key objective of this single source procurement is to enable Housing Moves and SCH to continue to operate, in order to deliver the policies and outcomes set out in paragraph 1.1 to 1.3 above.

3 Equality comments

3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2 Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being 'relevant' protected characteristics).

3.3 As those with the protected characteristics of age, race and disability are over-represented among existing social tenants, the proposals in this paper are likely to have positive impacts on these groups.

3.4 Characteristics of victims/survivors of domestic abuse (national figures) are as follows:

- Gender: women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high-risk or severe domestic abuse. Three-quarters of domestic abuse homicide victims in London between 2005 and 2020 were women.
- Age: younger people are more likely to be subject to interpersonal violence. Most high-risk victims are in their 20s or 30s. Those under 25 are the most likely to suffer interpersonal violence.
- Pregnancy: nearly one in three women who suffer from domestic abuse during their lifetime report that the first incidence of violence happened while they were pregnant.
- Separation: domestic abuse is highest amongst those who have separated, followed by those who are divorced or single.
- Drug and alcohol use: victims of abuse have a higher rate of drug and/or alcohol misuse (whether it starts before or after the abuse); at least 20 per cent of high-risk victims of abuse report using drugs and/or alcohol.

- Mental health: 40 per cent of high-risk victims of abuse report mental health difficulties.

3.5 Informed by the London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the Mayor's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy highlights that London faces some specific challenges in supporting survivors of domestic abuse, particularly to meet the needs of some Black and Minority Ethnic groups; LGBTQ+ people; young women; Deaf and disabled people; male survivors; and people with multiple disadvantages. As outlined above, those with protected characteristics of gender, age, pregnancy and disability are over-represented among victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

3.6 Of those seen sleeping rough in 2020-21:

- 50 per cent were non-UK nationals
- 4 per cent were from Gypsy/Romany/Traveller communities
- 44 per cent had a mental health need
- 16 per cent were women
- most (59 per cent) were in the 26-45 age group
- 10 per cent were under 26 years old
- 10 per cent were over 55.

3.7 Those with protected characteristics of race and disability are over-represented among rough sleepers. One of the two groups that it is proposed will be eligible for Housing Moves is former rough sleepers. By moving on from Clearing House properties they will free up these properties for those ready to move on from hostels, who in turn will free up hostel spaces for those on the streets. This is likely to have positive impacts on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners and those with disabilities. As the majority of people sleeping rough are men, more men than women are likely to access these services.

4 Other considerations

4.1 Key risks and issues

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
Contractors outside the icloud procurement system may challenge the basis of the procurement.	Green	This procurement route has been selected as the most appropriate by procurement advisors at TfL. It is within the terms of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and its basis will be clearly communicated to any contractors that may seek to challenge the procurement route.

4.2 Impact assessments and consultation

An independent evaluation of Housing Moves, completed in early 2022 (approved through at DAR in 2021), included consideration of the equalities impacts of the scheme. The Department for Communities and Local Government, which previously operated the scheme, undertook an equalities

impact assessment of Seaside & Country Homes in 2009 and a further assessment was subsequently undertaken by the GLA.

The London Housing Mobility Group (LHMG), chaired by the Mayor and with high level representation from boroughs and housing associations, provides oversight of the Mayor's mobility schemes. The London Housing Mobility Working Group (LHMWG), which contains operational staff from boroughs and housing association, provides operational input to the development and running of the schemes. There is regular consultation with both groups on all aspects of both schemes.

There are no conflicts of interest to note from any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 Executive Director's approval is sought for the allocation of funding from Seaside & Country Homes (SCH) income for expenditure of up to £50,000 on IT hosting, support and development services required for the Mayor's mobility schemes in 2023-24 and 2024-25. Estimated profile of the expenditure in 2023-24 and 2024-25 is provided under paragraph 1.8 above.
- 5.2 Approval is also sought for a contract to be put in place that allows for two one-year extensions, noting that GLA approval and funding will be required for the extension(s) to be exercised.
- 5.3 There is sufficient borough income expected from SCH lettings in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to fund this expenditure. To mitigate any risk of the contract not being sufficiently resourced through income in future years all contracts will include the usual break clauses that could potentially be exercised if required.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director fall within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to the promotion of social development in Greater London and that in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:
 - 6.1.1 pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - 6.1.2 consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - 6.1.3 consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Procurement

- 6.3 The officers are reminded to comply with the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code when undertaking the procurement of the new hosting services and IT support. Furthermore, given that the extension of the two programmes will be undertaken via a two year contract with an option to extend that contract for two further periods of 12 months each, the contract for hosting services and IT support should not be let for an unbroken four year period. Instead, the contract should be let for an initial period for two years with an option for two further periods of 12 months for which further approval will be required. The said option should be exercisable in Authority's sole and unfettered discretion

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract commences	w/c 6 th February 2023
Contract commences	1 April 2023

Appendices and supporting papers:

None

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? YES**

If YES, for what reason:

Contains information which may be commercially sensitive – publication to be deferred until procurement complete.

Until what date: 1 April 2023

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 – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Colin Gipp has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Debra Levison has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 16 January 2023.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature:



Date:

17/02/2023