

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE AND RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD224

Title: Procurement of BT Smart Numbers Service

Executive summary:

This report requests the approval of the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (Deputy Mayor) to authorise the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to commit revenue expenditure up to an amount set out in Part 2 of this report, for the purposes of procuring the BT Smart Numbers service.

The Smart Numbers service enables the LFC to divert incoming emergency (999) and other calls to specified points, both within and outside the organisation.

The London Fire Commissioner 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:

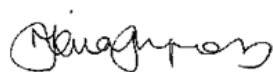
That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure up to the amount stated in Part 2 of the report, for the procurement of the BT Smart Numbers service.

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:

18/12/2023

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Report LFC-23-052 to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) explains that the BT Smart Numbers service has been used since the current mobilising (999) system was introduced in 2015. The service enables the LFC to divert incoming 999 and other calls to different end points (locations). These end points can be inside or outside of the organisation and are activated via a website or a phone. This has proven to be a simple, effective and extremely reliable service.
- 1.2. The Smart Numbers service also provides automatic call “rerouting”. If incoming calls cannot get through to the London Operations Centre call-handling systems (in Merton), they are automatically rerouted to the Stratford system, doubling the incoming circuit capacity.
- 1.3. The Smart Numbers service is a key component of the emergency call-handling process. It allows control to set up and maintain automatic and manual rerouting of calls, in a straightforward and proven manner.
- 1.4. BT Group PLC is the only organisation that provides the Smart Numbers service. The current contract with BT Group PLC for provision of this service ends in June 2024. The intention is to enter into a five-year contract with BT for the provision of this service.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The LFC proposes to enter into a new contract with BT Group PLC for provision of this service, to ensure continuity of this key service is maintained.
- 2.2. The continued operation of this service will ensure that the LFC can receive and distribute incoming emergency 999 (and other) calls in the most effective and resilient manner, maintaining the LFC’s ability to safeguard the people of London.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (Deputy Mayor) 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. An equality impact assessment has not been produced. The procurement of replacement BT Smart Numbers service will have no direct impact on staff or members of the public.

4. Other considerations

Workforce comments

4.1. There are no workforce consultations planned as a result of this report.

Sustainability comments

4.2. This report does not introduce any significant sustainability impacts. Where new policies and/or corporate projects arise, they are subject to London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) sustainable development impact assessment process.

Procurement comments

4.3. This requirement will be tendered to BT Group PLC using the Crown Commercial Service framework, Network Services 2 – RM3808. The framework covers telecommunications and provision of voice-calling services. The other frameworks that have been considered are the LPP Information Management and Technology Framework, and HealthTrust Europe's ICT Solutions Framework. However, neither offers the Smart Numbers service. Therefore, the Network Services 2 Framework is the best fit. This offers suitable terms and conditions, and competitive rates.

4.4. Collaboration with the GLA has been investigated, and LFB has been advised that there are no contracts in place that can be used for this procurement. A request will be issued to the National Fire Chiefs Council to establish if any other fire and rescue service (FRS) is tendering for the service at the same time, and if the tenders can be combined.

Conflicts of interest

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

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to procure the BT Smart Numbers service. The intention is to enter into a new, five-year contract with BT Group PLC for provision of this service, at a revenue cost as set out in Part 2 of the report, from July 2024.
- 5.2. There are no direct financial implications for the GLA.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. 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 LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. 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”. The Deputy Mayor’s approval is accordingly required for the LFC to expend the sums set out in part 2 of this report. Funding for the Smart Numbers Service, as detailed in this report, exceeds the specified limit and, as such, requires prior approval of the Deputy Mayor.
- 6.4. 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). Under section 7(2)(a) of the FRSA 2004, the LFC has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting. Section 5A of the FRSA allows the LFC to do anything, including the procurement of personnel, services and equipment, it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions, including where incidental or indirectly incidental to its functional purposes. The Smart Numbers Service referenced in this report is a key component of the emergency call-handling process, and therefore falls within the functions of the LFC.
- 6.5. This procurement will be carried out in compliance with the relevant statutory Procurement Regulations under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the relevant GLA and LFC standing orders on procurement.
- 6.6. These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC’s General Counsel Department in report LFC-23-052 to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

- Appendix 1 – Part 2 of the DMFD
- Appendix 2 - London Fire Commissioner report: LFC-23-052 – Procurement of BT Smart Numbers service – Part 1

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 be published either 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 18 December 2023.

✓

INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

18/12/2023