

Procurement of BT Smart Numbers Service

Report to:	Date:
Finance and Investment Board.....	29 March 2023
Commissioner's Board	17 May 2023
Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board	21 November 2023
London Fire Commissioner	

Report by:
Chief Information Officer

Report classification:
For decision

For publication

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

The report sets out plans to procure the BT Smart Numbers Service. The Smart Numbers service provides the ability for the LFC to divert incoming emergency (999) and other calls to specified points, both within and outside of the organisation.

The service is only available from BT. Approval is now sought to commit to the expenditure as set out in part two of this report, to procure the new Smart Numbers service.

Recommended decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director Technical and Commercial to enter into contracts for the procurement of the BT Smart Numbers service, up to the value stated in part 2 of this report.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The LFC has used the BT Smart Numbers service since the current mobilising (999) system was introduced in 2015. The service provides the LFC with the ability to divert incoming 999 and other calls to different end points (locations) within the organisation. These end points can be inside or outside of the organisation and are activated via a website or via a phone. This has proven to be a simple, effective and extremely reliable service.
- 1.2. The Smart numbers service also provides automatic call “re-routing”. If incoming calls cannot get through to the Merton (LOC) call handling systems, they are automatically re-routed to the Stratford system, This effectively doubles the incoming circuit capacity.
- 1.3. The Smart Numbers service is a key component of the emergency call handling process that allows control to setup and maintain automatic and manual re-routing of calls, in a straightforward and proven manner.

- 1.4. BT are the only organisation that provides the Smart Numbers service. The current contract with BT 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 objective of this report is to secure authorisation to procure the BT Smart Numbers service. The intention will be to enter into a new contract with BT 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 retains the ability to receive and distribute incoming emergency 999 (and other) calls in the most effective and resilient manner, maintaining the ability of the LFC to safeguard the people of London.

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 An equalities impact assessment has not been produced to accompany this report. 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 the Brigade's sustainable development impact assessment process.
- 4.3 This requirement will be tendered to BT using the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework – Network Services 2 – RM3808. The framework covers telecommunications and provision of voice calling services. Other Frameworks that have been considered are the LPP Information Management & Technology Framework and HealthTrust Europe's ICT Solutions Framework but neither offer the smart numbers service and so the best fit is the Network Services 2 Framework. This framework offers suitable terms and conditions and competitive rates.
- 4.4 Collaboration with the GLA has been investigated and we have been advised that there are no suitable contracts in place that we can use for this procurement. A request will be issued to the NFCC to establish if any other FRS is tendering for the service at the same time and if the tenders can be combined.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Please refer to the part 2 report for finance comments.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (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 for Fire and Resilience (the Deputy Mayor).
- 6.3 Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said 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.
- 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) 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; 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. 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 and the relevant GLA and LFC’s standing orders on procurement.

List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential
	None	

Part two confidentiality

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

Is there a part 2 form – YES

