

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR PLANNING, REGENERATION AND THE FIRE SERVICE DECISION – DMFD271

Title: Procurement of SAFEcommand™ Software

Executive summary:

The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) seeks authority to re-procure the Airbus SAFEcommand™ system, which includes modules for mobilising, guiding, messaging, crash recovery, risk information and chemical hazards.

The SAFEcommand™ system is used to deliver and display mobilising information to crews on appliances, via mobile data terminals. London Fire Brigade has been using the SAFEcommand™ (formerly VMDS) system for several years, and it was last re-procured in 2020. The system is comprised of the primary software, middleware and support of the system.

The existing contract expires in August 2025.

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”.

This decision updates DMFD264, which had proposed a three-year contract. This update now proposes a five-year contract to the value set in Part 2 of the decision.

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure, of up to the amount set out in the Part Two report, for the purposes of re-procuring the Airbus SAFEcommand™ for up to five years.

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service

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

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

10/07/2025

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Report LFC-25-052 to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) provides a detailed overview of the proposal to re-procure software to support the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) operational response to incidents.
- 1.2. As part of the national Firelink project, LFB introduced new digital technology to its appliances, including the installation of mobile data terminals (MDTs) in 2009. There are currently 176 MDTs in use, supported on a 24/7 basis. A project is under way to replace all of these devices with upgraded hardware running the Windows 11 operating system and the latest Airbus SAFEcommand™ software.
- 1.3. The MDTs allow fire crews to access operationally relevant data on the way to, and at, incidents.
- 1.4. This decision updates DMFD264, which had proposed a three-year contract. This update proposes a five-year contract, up to the value set in Part 2 of the decision. All other terms of the contract remain the same as agreed in DMFD264.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to re-procure the Airbus SAFEcommand™ system. This includes modules for mobilising, guiding, messaging, crash recovery, risk information and chemical hazards.
- 2.2. LFB had previously reasoned that a shorter three-year contract would provide an opportunity to evaluate other products on the market. However, such options can only be explored once the new mobilising system has been implemented and fully established. In addition, resource from NEC (who are also implementing the new mobilising system) will be required to assist in the implementation of any alternative to the SAFEcommand™ product. These resources are committed to further work after the implementation of the mobilising system. Therefore, a three-year contract would incur unnecessary risk. The contract will include "break clauses" should the landscape alter significantly over the next three years, which would allow the LFC to exit the five-year contract.
- 2.3. A successful procurement will ensure that continuity of service is maintained, allowing the MDTs installed in appliances and other LFB vehicles to continue to receive information from the Vision mobilising system.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The LFC, and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, 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 undertaken in respect of this decision. If the decision is approved and the SAFEcommand™ software is re-procured, the LFC will continue to use the SAFEcommand™ software that has been in use for a number of years.
- 3.9. Continued use of this software will have no impact on any persons with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The requirements have been assessed by LFB's procurement team, and via the initial assessment on the route to market identified the Crown Commercial Services, Vertical Application Solutions framework (RM 6259). This framework expires on 6 March 2027, so allows plenty of time to conduct a procurement using the direct award process.
- 4.2. The direct award process is considered appropriate for this, as only Airbus can realistically meet the requirements due to the inherent dependencies with the current Vision mobilising system. Possible competitive procurement routes will be looked at by LFB in the next couple of years, to inform the next procurement process and to assess market interest and capability.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.3. 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 decision paper seeks approval to renew the existing Airbus SAFEcommand™ system agreement by a further five years, upon expiry of the current agreement in August 2025. All costs related to the renewed agreement will be solely funded by LFC.
- 5.2. As an ongoing requirement, the system has been operational for a number of years. There is sufficient budget cover for the agreement renewal across all years.

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 for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (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 practice”. 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) 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; 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. This procurement will be carried out in compliance with applicable procurement law 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 LFC-25-052 to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 – Report LFC-25-019 – Procurement of Safecommand™

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

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

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

Chandru Dissanayake has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service for approval.

✓

Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 7 July 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:

Fay Hammond

Date:

08/07/2025