

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3261

Procurement of information services contract

Executive summary:

This paper seeks the Mayor's approval for the Greater London Authority (GLA) to undertake the procurement of a contractor to provide information services to the GLA for four years, with an option to extend for two further years.

The GLA currently has an information services contract that is due to expire at the end of March 2025. The proposed procurement is to undertake a new contract process for this service.

Decision:

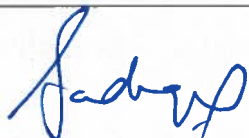
That the Mayor approves the GLA's procurement for the provision of information services, at an anticipated cost to the GLA of around £500,000 over the contract period (2025-26 to 2028-29) (£125,000 per annum), with an option to extend for a further two years. Any extension to the contract would require the Mayor's approval.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

4/6/24

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In 2018, the GLA agreed to a shared-service arrangement, whereby the LFC would procure and manage a contract for an information service, due to their greater understanding of these services. This agreement would benefit both organisations due to the sharing of resources between both organisations. The Mayor approved the arrangement on 13 July 2018 in MD2294; the LFC also approved the procurement action and agreed to finalise and execute a shared-service agreement with the GLA under section 401A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. In February 2019, the successful tender for the provision of a shared information service from the supplier – Idox Software Ltd (Idox) – was accepted.
- 1.2 In 2021, officers reviewed the contract and identified areas for savings. The contract was negotiated in March 2021, and services and charges were agreed for its final two years. This provided savings of approximately £10,000 per year. Contract management information demonstrates that the services provided are well used.
- 1.3 MD3052 (signed on 15 February 2023) approved a contract option for extending this contract for 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- 1.4 The information services provided by Idox are currently available to all members of GLA staff, and include the following:
 - provision of an enquiry service (covering a range of activities from profiling to literature searching)
 - access to full textbooks, journals and newspapers
 - training to strengthen information literacy
 - fortnightly bulletins highlighting new policy announcements, reports, official statistics, publications and research articles across various policy subject areas
 - a weekly information bulletin covering all policy areas relevant to the GLA
 - access to social/urban affairs databases, enabling GLA users to carry out their own searches for research articles.
- 1.5 The new contract will be overseen by a Supervisory Economist within the City Intelligence Unit (CIU), with support from the CIU Business & Project Support Officer. The contract will ensure quarterly meetings will be held with the supplier to address any delivery and contractual issues that may arise during the course of the contract with a contract review option being available in case of poor performance.
- 1.6 This MD sets out, for approval, the competitive procurement and contracting of the GLA's information services for 2025-26 to 2028-29. The procurement process for the service arrangement would commence in July 2024; and services would commence in April 2025, lasting four years (with an option to extend for a further two years).

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The primary objective is for the CIU to lead on the contracting of information services for the GLA, to continue the provision of this service to the GLA without interruption. Information services is

crucial in allowing the GLA to undertake research to support Mayoral priorities and policies via effective use of evidence.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to the 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 The “protected characteristics” are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership status. The duty involves having appropriate regard to these matters as they apply in the circumstances, including having regard to the need to: remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share or are connected to a protected characteristic; take steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encourage them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. This can involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.
- 3.3 At this stage, no equality issues have been identified with this decision, but this will be kept under review. We will work with TfL to ensure a comprehensive and fair procurement exercise is undertaken. Any strategies or plans produced by the provider will consider equalities issues.
- 3.4 The GLA information service supports awareness of the latest research and evidence on equalities to inform decision-making by staff; and produces a fortnightly specialist bulletin on equality and diversity. The Ask a Researcher service also supports staff to find specific equalities information for their projects.
- 3.5 The service supports initiatives on workplace mental health and workplace equalities training with resource lists.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1 Without an information services contract, the GLA will lack an information service provider. This will significantly hamper officers’ ability to undertake research and form policies.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.2 There are no known conflicts of interest to declare for those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for expenditure of up to £500,000, for the provision of the GLA’s information services. Costs will be incurred over four years: 2025-26 (£125k), 2026-27 (£125k), 2027-28 (£125k), and 2028-29 (£125k).

- 5.2 The 2025-26 costs will be funded from the Information Services budget within the CIU. Future years' budgets are indicative and subject to the GLA's annual budget-setting process.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or improvement of the environment, in Greater London.
- 6.2 In implementing the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers should comply with the GLA's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - 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
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.3 In taking the decisions requested, as noted in section 3 above, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not. To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.4 The procurements of services required for the project must be procured in accordance with the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code (the Code) and, where the value exceeds £150,000, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). Furthermore, the officers must liaise with Transport for London's procurement and supply chain team, which will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the Code and the Regulations. Officers must ensure that appropriate contractual documentation is put in place and executed by the chosen service provider/supplier and the Authority before services begin.
- 6.5 If the Mayor makes the decision sought, officers must ensure that no reliance is placed upon, nor commitment made to, expenditure stated, subject to the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 budget-setting process, until that process has been completed and the corresponding budgetary provision has been approved.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1 The project will be delivered according to the following schedule:

Activity	Timeline
Information services project team established	July 2024
Procurement strategy developed and agreed by team	July 2024
Procurement	July – November 2024
Award of contract	December 2024
Setup	January 2025
Contract start	April 2025

Appendices and supporting papers:

[MD3052 - Extension of Information Services Contract](#)

[MD2294 - Information Services Shared Service](#)

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) 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 it has been approved 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: Until the contract has been awarded.

Until what date: Expected date 15 January 2025.

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included 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:

Gordon Douglass has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Luke Bruce has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

David Bellamy has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 3 June 2024.

✓

INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

03/06/2024

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature:



Date:

03/06/2024