

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2751

Permission to extend IT contract for the Mayor's housing mobility schemes 2025-26

Executive summary

This decision form seeks approval for a 12-month extension to the IT hosting, support and development contract for the Mayor's housing mobility schemes – Seaside & Country Homes, and Housing Moves – at a cost of £24,154. The current contract was procured via the GCloud process for an initial period of two years (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025), with an option to extend by 12 months. The extension will enable both schemes to continue. The Housing Moves scheme is focused on supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse, and former rough sleepers, to move to a safe and permanent home. The Seaside & Country Homes scheme enables older people to move out of London, thereby releasing family homes.

There is sufficient budget available to cover this cost.

The original procurement was approved through Director Decision (DD)2622.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Housing and Land approves:

- the allocation of funding (from Seaside & Country Homes scheme income) for expenditure of £24,154 on IT hosting, support and development services required for the Mayor's mobility schemes in 2025-26
- the extension of the call-off contract ICT14318 between GLA and Home Connections to undertake IT hosting, support and development for 12 months, from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

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: Natalie Daniels

Position: Assistant Director, Housing and Land

Signature:



Date:

11/03/2025

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

Housing Moves

- 1.1. Housing Moves, launched in May 2012, is the Mayor's scheme to enable housing association and council tenants in London to move from one borough to another (approved through Mayoral Decision (MD)522). The scheme was refocused 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-mentioned groups. Currently, 236 domestic abuse victims/survivors are registered with the scheme; 170 moves were achieved between October 2019 and January 2025. In addition, 349 former rough sleepers (people with a history of rough sleeping, who are moving on from supported accommodation) are registered, with 235 moves between May 2019 and January 2025.

Seaside & Country Homes

- 1.3. Seaside & Country Homes (SCH) enables older social tenants to move out of the capital, freeing up between 150 and 180 family-sized homes each year. These can then be used by social landlords to house Londoners in need. Over 3,000 tenants are currently registered on the SCH scheme. The scheme creates significant financial savings for London boroughs; and provides a positive and popular housing option for older Londoners. It was established in 1968; the Mayor brought it into the GLA (from the Department for 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 whose functionality includes:
 - 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 system for Housing Moves and (subsequently) SCH was developed by Home Connections Lettings Ltd, and is a much-enhanced version of its off-the-shelf choice-based lettings system. Home Connections has provided the hosting and 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; support for SCH was added 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 extended the contract for two more years, as allowed within that contract, with the extensions being approved through DD2521. The current contract was procured via the GCloud process as a call-off 13 contract for two years, with the option to extend by 12 months (approved through DD2622).
- 1.6. Current contractual arrangements for hosting, support and IT development end on 31 March 2025. There are compelling reasons for continuing both schemes beyond this date:
 - They are both strategically important to London, and 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 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 SCH.
 - There is overwhelming support from London's boroughs and housing associations for both schemes. All boroughs, except one, participate (and fund) SCH. In addition, over 60 housing associations support applications to SCH. The G15 also contributes properties to Housing Moves.
 - There is a high level of demand, among Londoners, for SCH – over 3,000 applicants are currently registered for SCH, and there are high numbers of new applications each year.
 - The refocused Housing Moves scheme is providing valuable additional housing options for domestic abuse victims/survivors; and for tenants who were originally allocated their home via the Clearing House service, and are ready to move to independent living.
- 1.7. The service was procured using the GCloud procurement process. Home Connections is registered on the GCloud database for the services. TfL Procurement has advised that we may invoke the 12-month contract extension, and there is no requirement to sign a new contract.
- 1.8. The cost for the additional 12 months is £24,154. Costs for IT hosting have been budgeted for the next three years, and there is sufficient budget to cover this cost.
- 1.9. The current contract, which we wish to extend, is to provide hosting and support at a fixed cost.
- 1.10. The extension needs to be confirmed as soon as possible, to ensure both schemes can continue beyond 31 March 2025. This is needed because:
- boroughs have already been invited to purchase a maximum number of lettings for SCH during 2025-26; addendums to the SCH contracts between each borough and the GLA are already being issued
 - the Housing Mobility team is already advising G15 landlords how many properties they will need to contribute to the Housing Moves scheme in 2025-26.
- 1.11. It would not be prudent to devote further resources to IT development, or 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 contract extension is to enable Housing Moves and SCH to continue, in order to deliver the policies and outcomes set out in paragraphs 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 proposal in this paper is likely to have positive impacts on these groups.
- 3.4. Moves through the SCH scheme will release between 150 and 180 family-sized homes each year. These can then be used by social landlords to house Londoners in need, including those mentioned at paragraph 3.3.
- 3.5. The Housing Moves scheme will support victims/survivors of domestic abuse to move to a safe location. Characteristics of victims/survivors of domestic abuse (national figures) are as follows:
- Gender: women are much more likely than men to be 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.
- 3.6. 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. This is particularly the case when meeting 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 sex, age, pregnancy and disability are over-represented among victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 3.7. The Housing Moves scheme also supports people with a history of rough sleeping to move to a permanent home. The most recent data from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network for 2023-24 makes the following observations of those seen sleeping rough:
- 59 per cent were non-UK nationals (including "not known")
 - 24 per cent were Black or Black British
 - 4 per cent were Roma
 - 48 per cent had a mental health need
 - 16 per cent were female
 - most (59 per cent) were aged 26-45
 - 10 per cent were under 26 years old
 - 12 per cent were over 55.
- 3.8. Those with the protected characteristics of race and disability are over-represented among rough sleepers. Former rough sleepers who are ready to move on from accommodation with support make up one of the two groups eligible for Housing Moves. By moving on from this accommodation, allocated through the Clearing House service, they will free up properties for those ready to move on from hostels, who in turn will free up hostel space 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. The contract extension needs to be confirmed as soon as possible, to ensure both schemes continue beyond 31 March 2025.
- 4.2. Both schemes are strategically important to London. They play a key role in helping to meet current Mayoral priorities relating to: the supply of affordable housing, and domestic abuse safe accommodation; and ending rough sleeping in London.
- 4.3. An independent evaluation of Housing Moves, completed in early 2022, 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 SCH in 2009. A further assessment was subsequently undertaken by the GLA.
- 4.4. 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. The decision is seeking approval to extend the IT contract with Homes Connections by 12 months, effective from 1 April 2025. The contract services provided by the extended contract will be the provision of IT hosting and support for the Mayor's housing mobility schemes (SCH and Housing Moves). The cost for the additional 12 months is £24,154 plus VAT. There is sufficient budget to meet the cost of the extended contract.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. The work will be delivered according to the following schedule:

Activity	Timeline
Contract extension continues	1 April 2025

Appendices and supporting papers:

None

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: It contains information that may be commercially sensitive. The publication should be deferred until the contract extension is complete.

Until what date: 1 April 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:

Alexandra Derham has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 10 March 2025.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:

Anna Eastcott

Date:

10/03/2025