



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-26-061

Contingent Labour Contract

Report to:

Investment & Finance Board
Commissioner's Board
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date:

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7 July 2026
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Report by:

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Authorising Head of Service:

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Report classification:

For decision

For publication

Values met

Service

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

The LFB's current temporary contingent labour contract with Reed Talent Solutions is due to expire on the 30 September 2026. This report provides the procurement approach taken to recommend awarding a new contract.

Should a decision be taken not to grant this contract LFB would have no temporary staffing service provision, this would affect the current agency workers and impact on service continuity in areas of LFB where agency workers have placements. In addition, the brigade does not possess any in-house temporary contingent labour supply expertise to manage the recruitment of agency workers and thus would have no means to source contingent workers when needed.

Recommended Decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) agrees that the amount detailed in part 2 to be allocated from the LFC revenue budget for the purpose of a 5-year contract for contingent labour.

LFC delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial to enter into contract once agreed.

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The London Fire Commissioner entered into a contract with Reed Talent Solutions on 29 August 2021 following a collaborative procurement with the TfL/GLA Group. This contract expired on the 30 September 2025. The GLA Collaborative Recruitment Services framework duration was 3 +1 years commencing 30 September 2021, with a final framework completion date of 30 September 2025.
- 1.2 A further call-off under the existing framework agreement with Reed Talent Solutions was approved under DMFD274 and will end on 30th September 2026 with an option to extend for a further 12 months. This was to allow sufficient time for the GLA Group collaborative to assess collective requirements, undertake market engagement and benchmarking, and determine the appropriate route to market. The option to extend for a further 12-month option was included in any mobilisation required once a contract was awarded.
- 1.3 Market engagement, benchmarking, and the assessment of route-to-market options have been completed against the service line requirements as part of a total talent management approach.

This includes contingent labour, permanent recruitment, Statement of Works (SOW), resource augmentation, vendor management systems, talent pools, recruit–train–deploy models, and market insights. The delivery model acted as a 'pick and mix' offering, enabling organisations to select which service lines they use depending on their needs.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The objective is to award a compliant contingent labour contract that delivers value for money, supported by analysis of the GLA collaborative delivery model, LFC's internal benchmarking and assessment of route-to-market options. The expected outcome is a commercially robust solution that meets operational requirements while optimising cost, quality, and supplier performance.
- 2.2 The GLA collaboration procurement group produced an estimated cost and benefits analysis of the proposed delivery models and provided a recommendation for each participating organisation.
- 2.3 LFC has a service line requirement for contingent labour only. The recommendation following consideration of the quantified costs and benefits, strategic benefits and additional factors is to undertake an award. This approach aligns with one of the delivery options assessed by the GLA. A new contract is proposed to commence on 1st October 2026 for a term of two years with three further 12-month extension options. This contract term is to enable flexibility and support potential collaboration opportunities with the Met Police and the GLA collaboration group.
- 2.4 The LFC has undertaken an assessment of the available options and benchmarked against a contingent labour baseline of 100. This figure reflects a reduction in workforce numbers from 131 in December 2024 to 76 in May 2026. Further detail is provided in Part 2 of this report.
- 2.5 The proposed award under the ESPO MSTAR4 framework will identify the most cost effective option. The proposed award is compliant with the framework's call-off provisions, which enable authorities to award contracts either via further competition or direct award where the framework terms, pricing mechanisms, and service scope are sufficiently defined.
- 2.6 The decision will be underpinned by value for money and proportionality considerations. Additional considerations are operational processes, system integration, mobilisation period, and any costs from transitioning to an alternative supplier.
- 2.7 Continuity of service is critical to maintaining workforce supply and operational resilience. A change in provider may introduce additional delivery risk, including disruption to service continuity, delays in fulfilling resource requirements, and potential impact on performance during transition. These issues will be considered in the procurement process.
- 2.8 Additional controls have been implemented to reduce contingent labour spending. All agency hires and extensions now require approval through the Vacancy Control Panel (VCP), with quarterly reporting to the Establishment Board on agency usage and spend. HR Business Partners meet monthly with Heads of Service to challenge demand and ensure agency use is essential and delivers value for money. In parallel, Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) supports improved forecasting, skills planning and alignment of resources to future demand, reducing reliance on agency staff over time. While these controls are expected to reduce usage, contingent labour will remain necessary to meet short-term and critical resourcing needs, and the contract is therefore required to support this. The Head of Resourcing confirmed that the agency workforce number has reduced from 131 (December 2024) to 76 (May 2026) following the implementation of controls through the Vacancy Control Panel (VCP). It is anticipated that the number of agency staff will continue to decrease as LFB strengthens its workforce planning

processes, in line with commitments set out in the LFB Annual Plan 2026–2027.

3 Values Comments

3.1 The LFC notes the Fire Standards Board requirements around adopting and embedding the Core Code of Ethics at an individual and corporate level. Following extensive engagement, the LFC has introduced Brigade values which build on and do not detract from the Code of Ethics.

3.2 The Brigade values are:

- Service: we put the public first
The contract ensures a reliable and responsive supply of skilled temporary staff to maintain critical services and operational resilience, directly supporting frontline delivery to the public
- Integrity: we act with honesty
The procurement approach is compliant, transparent, and evidence-based, ensuring value for money, robust governance, and fair treatment of suppliers
- Teamwork: we work together and include everyone
The contract enables effective collaboration between LFC, the supplier, and internal stakeholders (HR, Finance, operational teams), ensuring aligned workforce planning and inclusive delivery.
- Equity: we treat everyone fairly according to their needs
The supplier is required to support fair, inclusive recruitment practices, ensuring equal access to opportunities and diverse talent pools that reflect the communities served.
- Courage: we step up to the challenge
The decision to implement strong controls (e.g. VCP, demand challenge) and address reliance on agency labour demonstrates proactive management and a willingness to challenge existing practices.
- Learning: we listen so that we can improve
Ongoing contract management, performance monitoring, and market engagement enable continuous improvement, ensuring lessons learned are embedded, and future workforce strategies are strengthened.

4 Equality Comments

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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.

4.8 The EIA screening has identified potential negative impacts for agency workers in relation to caring responsibilities, pregnancy/maternity and disability, primarily due to differences in entitlement and support compared to directly employed staff. However, the screening concluded that a full EIA is not required at this stage.

5 Other considerations

The continued provision of contingent labour is required beyond the expiry of the current contract on 30 September 2026.

Workforce comments

5.1 Potential workforce implications are limited. While there may be some continued reliance on contingent labour and associated cost pressures, these are being mitigated through strengthened controls and workforce planning. No formal consultation with representative bodies is required, as the proposal maintains existing arrangements and does not introduce substantive changes.

Sustainability comments

- 5.2 The Good Work Standard sets the benchmark the Mayor wants every London employer to work towards and achieve. Organisations able to meet or work towards the Good Work Standard criteria are encouraged to apply for accreditation and recognition as leading employers from the Mayor.
- 5.3 Expectation that the successful provider will engage with Micro and SME businesses via the second-tier supply chain, will pay all temporary worker and own employees in accordance with the National Minimum Wage and the Living Wage, incorporating the London Living Wage where applicable and will comply with the GLA group anti-slavery policies and not engage in any modern slavery or unlawful practices.
- 5.4 LFC expects all workers in its supply chain to be provided with fair employment conditions. The Supplier shall ensure that exploitive zero hours contracts are not used in the supply chain, or in any other employment practice that exploits people working in our supply chain.
- 5.5 The supplier is expected to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy.

Procurement comment

- 5.6 The recommended procurement route is via the ESPO MSTAR4 framework, an established public sector framework that enables a compliant award. This approach provides an efficient and legally compliant route to market while ensuring alignment with LFC's technical and operational requirements. It delivers value for money, as suppliers on the framework have already been subject to a robust and compliant competitive process, with key terms, pricing structures, and scope pre-agreed.
- 5.7 An award under this framework therefore represents a proportionate and defensible approach, enabling LFC to secure a capable supplier while maintaining assurance over quality, commercial terms, and overall value, and avoiding unnecessary procurement delay.
- 5.8 The current call-off contract includes an option to extend for a further 12 months, expiring on 30 September 2027. However, as the ESPO MSTAR4 framework is due to expire on 10 April 2027, any new call-off contract must be awarded prior to this date. LFC does not intend to utilise the extension option and will instead award a new contract commencing on 1 October 2026. All call-offs under the framework remain subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The framework continues to meet LFC's requirements, and no material amendments to the standard call-off terms are anticipated.
- 5.9 The total contract value detailed in part 2 is based on LFC's projected requirement for an average of 100 contingent workers per day. This includes provision for an additional contingency of approximately 24 workers per month to provide operational flexibility and respond to fluctuating demand over the five-year term. The value also incorporates an assumed annual uplift of 5% on day rates. The projected cost profile is set out in part 2.

Communications comments

5.7 There are no new or amended policies that will impact service provision to be communicated.

6 Financial comments

- 6.1 The report seeks approval to create a contract for the provision of contingent labour for a period covering up to five years, upon expiry of the current agreement in September 2026.
- 6.2 All costs related to the contract will be solely funded by the LFC revenue budget. The total amount being sought in part 2 for up to 5 years.
- 6.3 The contract will be funded through existing departmental budgets, which are already being used to cover agency staff spend. Agency spend arises primarily from staff vacancies and also for specific roles in projects which need a temporary resource. Where covering a vacant position, there is usually a premium for an agency worker over a permanent worker; that agency staff spend will be monitored against funding available as part of regular financial position reporting to ensure a sustainable position in year. Projects that need agency workers for specific skillsets or temporary positions have to request funding via business case and spend against that is monitored as part of project governance. There are currently a relatively high number of agency staff within the ICT function. It is anticipated that this number will reduce following the outcome of any review undertaken in conjunction with the appointment of a new Digital and Data Officer.
- 6.4 The level of agency staff will be managed through processes established by LFC, such as the vacancy control panel (VCP). This process is an additional step in monitoring the levels of agency hires and has already led to a significant reduction in agency workers and overall cost to LFB.
- 6.5 Should a decision be taken not to grant a contract, LFB would have no temporary staffing service provision; this would impact service continuity in areas of LFB where agency workers have placements. It would mean that all agency workers would have to be hired under separate agreements, and it is likely that these would be at disadvantageous rates compared with the proposed contract.

7 Legal Comments

- 7.1 This report seeks approval to commit expenditure of money set out in part 2 of the report for the purpose of entering into a contingent labour contract.
- 7.2 Under Section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the Commissioner') is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.
- 7.3 Section 327D of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, as amended, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.
- 7.4 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters for which the Commissioner would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Fire (the Deputy Mayor'). In particular, paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above is identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...". The proposed expenditure exceeds this financial threshold, accordingly,

prior approval from the Deputy Mayor will be sought.

- 7.5 The report confirms the new contract with a supplier will be procured under the terms of existing and currently accessible framework agreement (ESPO MSTAR4 framework) which was procured following an open procurement exercise in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 7.6 Ensuring the LFC has access to temporary staff, as and when needed, will enable the Brigade to operate both efficiently and effectively.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	Initial EIA	Open

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 Two form: YES