

Request for Deputy Mayor for Fire decision – DMFD298

Operational research and modelling services

Executive summary:

London Fire Brigade (LFB) uses operational research and modelling services, and its Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT), to support evidence-based decision-making and maintain its operational resilience. LFB Control uses the DCT to inform real-time decisions about how to move fire appliances temporarily, to maintain safe and effective fire cover across London.

LFB is seeking approval from the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service, to commit revenue spending (up to the amount set out in part 2) to continue to provide and develop the DCT, and associated operational research and modelling services, for up to five years. LFB's current operational research contract ends in November 2026

LFB proposes to procure these services through a direct award, under a compliant public-sector procurement framework. LFB reports that this will:

- ensure continuity of service
- maintain specialist expertise
- support delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and wider organisational priorities.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the London Fire Commissioner 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".

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service authorises the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure up to the amount set out in Part 2 to procure operational research and modelling services, including the continued use and development of the Dynamic Cover Tool.

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: 8 September 2026

Part 1 – Non-confidential facts and advice

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Report LFC-26-059 to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) sets out London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) request to re-procure a contract for ongoing operational research support and modelling services. This is a summary of that report.
- 1.2 LFB has a longstanding relationship with Operational Research in Health Limited (ORH). LFB last procured operational research and modelling services from ORH in November 2022; this was to support the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and other priorities. LFB ran its last procurement in two parts. The cost for each part was under the £150,000 approval threshold for Deputy Mayor for Fire Decisions.
- 1.3 Since then, ORH has worked with LFB to develop the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT), which is used in the London Operations Centre (known as Control). The DCT provides real-time operational research and simulation modelling. This is used to support Control managers in making temporary appliance moves when there is high demand or reduced resource availability.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 LFB is seeking approval to re-procure a contract with ORH that includes the continued use and development of the DCT and associated operational research and modelling services. LFB anticipates that a successful procurement will:
 - provide continuity of service for both elements
 - continue to support scenario modelling and evidence-based decision-making for LFB's CRMP and wider priorities.
- 2.2 The contract would be for three years, with the option to extend for up to two one-year periods (totalling five years – three years, plus one year, plus one year). LFB proposes to use a Government Commercial Agency framework as its preferred compliant route to market (i.e., Blue Light Solutions (lot 5) of the Vertical Application Solutions Framework).

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC, and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor), are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the decision on those with protected characteristics (see paragraph 3.3).
- 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 LFB has not completed an Equalities Impact Assessment in relation to this proposal. It does not consider that the continued use of operational research services or the DCT will have any impact in relation to protected characteristics.

4. Other considerations

Procurement comments

- 4.1 The LFC has an ongoing requirement for specialist consultancy services to support delivery of the CRMP. This includes operational research; modelling capability; and associated analytical tools. LFB's current contract with ORH ends in November 2026.
- 4.2 LFB proposes to use a Government Commercial Agency framework called Vertical Application Solutions (lot 5, Blue Light Solutions), to make a direct contract award to ORH that complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The contract term will be up to five years (three years, plus one year, plus one year).
- 4.3 LFB has identified a direct award to ORH as compliant, cost-effective and operationally viable for this procurement. LFB has determined that it does not have the capacity, or specialist capability, to undertake this work internally. LFB's market testing identified ORH as the only feasible supplier.

Sustainability comments

- 4.4 LFC-26-059 states that this procurement does not introduce any significant sustainability impacts. The Sustainable Development team is involved in assessing responsible procurement criteria during the procurement process.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 LFC-26-059 seeks approval for LFB to enter into a new contract for the provision of operational research and modelling services, and use of the DCT. The contract term is up to five years, and will begin upon expiry of the current agreement in November 2026. The services and products to be provided by the contract will satisfy ongoing requirements for consultancy services for operational research, including modelling and services in support of the CRMP.
- 5.2 All costs related to the new agreement will be solely funded by the LFC revenue budget. The amount is set out in part 2.
- 5.3 There is sufficient budget cover for the contract across all years, as LFB has had an equivalent contract in place for several years. LFB has an ongoing requirement for these products and services.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The LFC's General Counsel's department has confirmed the following.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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 & the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor).
- 6.4 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".
- 6.5 The Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required to authorise the LFC to commit revenue expenditure of up to the amount set out in part 2. This is to procure continued use and development of the DCT, and operational research and modelling services.
- 6.6 The LFC may delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement & Commercial to enter into a contract for procuring operational research and modelling services, and use of the DCT. This would be entered into in accordance with the arrangement set out in part 2.
- 6.7 The General Counsel has reviewed the report and notes that the proposed arrangement is consistent with the LFC's power, under section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to do anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions.

- 6.8 Furthermore, under section 7 (2)(a) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the LFC has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting.
- 6.9 The General Counsel also notes, at paragraph 5.4 of LFC-26-059 part 1, that the proposed procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the LFC's procurement procedures, and through a compliant procurement process.

Appendices and supporting papers:

LFC-26-059 Operational Research (including modelling) services – part 1

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 be published either 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

Daisy McLachlan 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 Dissanayeke 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.

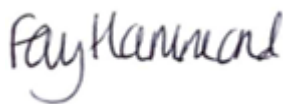
✓

Mayoral Delivery Board:

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 7 September 2026.

Chief Finance Officer

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



Signature

Date 8 September 2026