LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC – 26-080

Gas Tight Chemical Protection Suit (GTCPS) Replacement

Report to:

Investment & Finance Board	27 August 2026
Commissioners Board	14 September 2026
Deputy Mayors Fire Board	29 September 2026
London Fire Commissioner	

Report by:

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Report classification:

For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Integrity
Teamwork
Equity
Courage
Learning

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This is a proposal to secure funding set out in Part 2 of the report to enable the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to procure replacement Gas Tight Chemical Protection Suits (GTCPS) that are situated at fire stations, training venues and the Operations Support Centre (OSC).

Recommended decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The LFC agrees to commit revenue set out in Part Two of this report to procure Gas Tight Chemical Protection Suits and delegate authority to Assistant Director, Procurement & Commercial to enter into contract.

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The London Fire Brigade (LFB) currently maintains one type of Gas Tight Chemical Protective Suit:

- The GTL is a Type 1A - ET single use, regular robustness encapsulating gas-tight suit designed to protect against toxic, corrosive gases, liquids and solid chemicals. The suit is manufactured from Chemprotex™ 400 chemical barrier fabric.

1.2 The Gas Tight Chemical Protection Suit (GTCPS) is deployed during hazardous materials (HazMat) incidents requiring the highest level of protection for operational personnel. It provides comprehensive defence against a wide range of chemical hazards, including both liquids and gases. The suit is used in conjunction with HZMX boots, which serve to complete the protective ensemble by safeguarding the suit's integral booties and providing additional protection to the wearer's feet against mechanical shock.

1.3 The bulk of the current GTCPS were purchased in 2016, therefore, the GTCPS currently in circulation reach the end of their life in 2026/27. A 7-year test has been completed on the suits, as per the manufacturer's recommendation, which extends their life up to the maximum 10-year life span. This cannot be extended further. Below is a table of the quantity of GTCPS that are due to expire within the next three years:

Financial Year	Quantity Expiring
To 31 March 2027	805

To 31 March 2028	201
To 31 March 2029	155
Total	**1,161**

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 It is recommended that current GTCPS holdings be reduced from 1,161 units to 765, reflecting a more proportionate and evidence-based approach to operational needs. This revised figure incorporates the 698 suits required to equip all frontline appliances, alongside a reduction from a 60% strategic reserve down to a 10% strategic reserve to be maintained at the Operations Support Centre (OSC) for resilience.

2.2 The rationale for this reduction is supported by historical usage data, which shows that GTCPS has been deployed on only 16 occasions over the past five years. A reduction to 765 units would maintain operational readiness while aligning stock levels with actual risk and usage patterns. Below is a table that shows the allocations and stock levels required:

Appliance Type/Team	Quantity	Total Allocation
PL	102	408
P	40	160
FRU	14	112
RRT	1	18
OSG Reserve	67	67
Total		**765**

2.3 Following this proposed replacement programme, the forecasted expenditure would not occur again for another nine years, with as and when replacements being purchased from local OSG budgets in between. It is recommended that Finance note and forecast that this expenditure will need budgeted for again in the 2035/36 financial year with an additional contingency to allow for an increase in price per unit. This will allow for a complete replacement of GTCPS after their 10-year life has ended and are required to be replaced.

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 - Refreshing our GTCPS capability is fundamentally about strengthening our commitment to the communities we serve. By modernising our equipment, we will ensure a more effective, resilient, and responsive service for the public when attending incidents involving hazardous substances. This refreshed capability will enable us to respond safely and efficiently to a wider range of complex incidents, minimising

risk to communities, the environment, and our personnel. Through continuous improvement and investment in our people and resources, we are reinforcing our commitment to delivering the highest standards of public service, ensuring that the needs, safety, and wellbeing of the public remain at the centre of everything we do.

Integrity: we act with honesty - Refreshing our GTCPS capability will be underpinned by a commitment to integrity, ensuring that decisions are made transparently, responsibly, and in the best interests of the communities we serve. By openly assessing our current capability, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing evidence-based solutions, we demonstrate accountability and a willingness to continuously learn and evolve. This refresh programme will be delivered through honest engagement with stakeholders, clear governance, and robust evaluation of outcomes, ensuring that resources are invested effectively and operational capability is enhanced where it delivers the greatest benefit. Through this approach, we reinforce trust in our service and uphold the highest professional standards in everything we do.

Teamwork: we work together and include everyone - Refreshing our GTCPS capability will be achieved through a collaborative and inclusive approach that values the knowledge, experience, and perspectives of all those involved. By engaging operational personnel, subject matter experts, partners, and stakeholders throughout the process, we can ensure that the refreshed capability reflects operational needs, incorporates best practice, and supports effective service delivery. Working together will foster innovation, strengthen ownership of the change programme, and promote consistency across teams and functions. Through open communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to inclusion, we will build a more capable, resilient, and sustainable GTCPS function that delivers the best possible outcomes for our communities and our people.

Equity: we treat everyone fairly according to their needs - Refreshing our GTCPS capability provides an opportunity to ensure that our people, communities, and stakeholders are supported in a fair, inclusive, and proportionate way. By recognising differing operational requirements, we can provide the appropriate training, resources, and support necessary for all personnel to contribute effectively and safely. The refreshed capability will be designed to promote consistency of service delivery while remaining flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of the communities we serve. Through equitable access to opportunities, transparent decision-making, and consideration of operational and community requirements, we will build a stronger, more representative, and more effective GTCPS capability that delivers positive outcomes for everyone.

Courage: we step up to the challenge - Refreshing our GTCPS capability demonstrates our commitment to embracing change, challenging established practices, and proactively preparing for the evolving risks and demands faced by the service. By investing in new approaches, developing specialist knowledge, and adopting innovative solutions, we are taking decisive action to ensure our capability remains effective, resilient, and fit for the future. This programme requires the confidence to evaluate current performance, learn from experience, and implement improvements that enhance operational readiness and public safety. Through strong leadership, professional curiosity, and a shared determination to succeed, we will strengthen our GTCPS capability and ensure we are ready to meet complex challenges whenever and wherever they arise.

Learning: we listen so that we can improve - Refreshing our GTCPS capability is founded on a culture of continuous learning and improvement. By actively listening to operational personnel, subject matter experts, partners, and the communities we serve, we can identify opportunities to enhance our capability and ensure it remains aligned to current and

emerging risks. Lessons identified from incidents, exercises, debriefs, and industry best practice will be used to inform decision-making, strengthen operational effectiveness, and drive innovation. Through ongoing evaluation, knowledge sharing, and a commitment to learning from experience, we will create a more agile, resilient, and future-focused GTCPS capability that delivers safer and more effective outcomes for both our people and the public.

4 Equality Comments

4.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor of 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.

5 Workforce comments

5.1 The implementation of the GTCPS refresh is not anticipated to have any adverse impact on operational capability; however, consideration will need to be given to workforce-related implications during the transition period. This includes ensuring that sufficient resources are available to support implementation activities, training requirements, familiarisation, and any associated change management processes without detriment to business-as-usual operations.

5.2 Appropriate workforce planning should be undertaken to mitigate any temporary resourcing pressures and maintain service resilience throughout the rollout. In addition, early and meaningful engagement with representative bodies, trade unions, and affected staff will be essential to ensure that any proposed changes are understood, concerns are identified and addressed, and statutory consultation requirements are met where applicable. Ongoing communication and stakeholder engagement will support workforce confidence, facilitate adoption of the refreshed arrangements, and help ensure operational effectiveness is maintained at all times.

6 Sustainability comments

6.1 This report discusses the proposed budget for the GTCPS Refresh and subsequent immediate procurement of 765 suits.

6.2 It broadly supports the LFC Sustainable Development Strategy aims however, due regard must be given to adherence and compliance with the GLA group responsible procurement and social value policy, to which the LFC is a signatory.

6.3 Where possible, options for re-use of assets should be explored, and the purchase of single-use items should always be minimised and utilised as an option of last resort. In addition, the successful supplier of the GTCPS is expected to adopt the nine provisions of the Ethical Trading Initiative's Base Code, incorporating the core International Labour Organisation conventions, or equivalent.

6.4 Textiles are defined as high risk within the Commissioners Ethical Sourcing Policy and the LFC recognises that having a supply chain inherently carries the risk of exploitation and wants to work with suppliers who understand the risks and are willing to do their part to address them.

6.5 Suppliers of the proposed GTCPS will be expected to consider circular economy principles, lifecycle management (including disposal) and ethical sourcing practices to minimise the human and labour rights risks in its supply chains. It is essential that the environmental impact of the purchase, use, and disposal of GTCPS is minimised over its lifetime.

6.6 Where new policies; projects, procurements and new equipment arise from this proposed budget increase, they will be subject to the Brigade's sustainable development impact assessment process which must be completed and submitted to the sustainable development team for review.

7 Procurement comments

7.1 The Framework for the Supply and Delivery of CBRN Protective Clothing – Lot 6 - Chemical Splash Suit SC1 – 062 and Gas Tight Suits was established between the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands Police and Respirex International Ltd through an Open Procedure conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and is available for use by all UK Fire and Rescue Services. The OJEU Contract Notice, advertising the framework, was issued on 30 April 2018 and Respirex was selected as the sole supplier, under Lot 6, following an expression of interest, invitation to tender and evaluation of its tender, which was submitted on 4 June 2018. The framework commenced on 1 July 2019 for an initial five-year term, ending on 30 June 2024. The framework was subsequently extended for a fixed 36-month period, from 1 July 2024, with an option to extend for a further 24 months.

7.2 The framework has been designed to provide Fire and Rescue Services with a compliant and efficient route to market for the procurement of gas tight suits and associated products. The framework permits direct award under Lot 6, as Respirex International Ltd is the sole supplier under this Lot and is also the manufacturer of the GTL Type 1A - ET single-use gas tight suit, specifically required by LFB, thus eliminating the need for a further competition.

7.3 The proposed direct award provides assurance that the supplier has been subject to a compliant competitive procurement process. This approach enables the LFC to achieve value for money, maintain continuity of supply and minimise procurement timescales whilst remaining compliant with procurement legislation.

8 Communications comments

8.1 If approved, the changes will need to be communicated to relevant operational staff ahead of implementation, particularly where they affect GTCPS holdings, allocation, familiarisation or working arrangements. Communications should be timed to align with the implementation and training plan and use existing operational channels, including Operational Teams Weekly and Hotwire, supported by appropriate management briefings where required. Internal Communications can advise on the most appropriate channels and timing once implementation dates and any required actions for staff are confirmed.

9 Financial comments

9.1 This report is requesting authority to commit revenue funding for the purchase of 765 GTCPS across financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, as the current stock are reaching end of operational life.

9.2 The main risk relates to increase in unit prices of GTCPS', although this is mitigated by the procurement framework only allowing for a maximum price increase of 5.5% on each anniversary of the framework.

10 Legal Comments

10.1 This report seeks approval to commit expenditure of money set out in the report in order to replace existing gas tight chemical protection suits.

10.2 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.

10.3 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.

10.4 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.

10.5 The report confirms the replacement Gas suits will be procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 under an existing and accessible framework making it a compliant route to market.

10.6 Having fit for purpose gas tight chemical suits available will ensure the Brigade can fulfil its core duties.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	SDIA	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