GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3551

Planning back-office system re-procurement

Programme: Making Best Use Of Land

Executive summary:

This decision seeks approval to procure continued access to the back-office system that support the GLA's strategic planning service, and related licences. The new contract would begin on 1 October 2026. The system will manage planning referrals, pre-application and payment workflows, case records and reporting across Planning and Regeneration and partner teams (including Transport for London (TfL) Spatial Planning). The choice of Arcus as the supplier would be subject to the successful completion of the G-Cloud direct award process.

This MD sits alongside Mayoral Decisions (MDs) 2525, 3044 and 3293; these approved procurement of the Arcus system currently used to manage the GLA's back-office planning processes. This has led to the development of a highly customised system to manage the unique workflows of GLA and TfL's planning teams. The proposed spend of up to £616,000 is based on procuring a replacement contract to maintain the service, pending a long-term review of requirements and the market.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

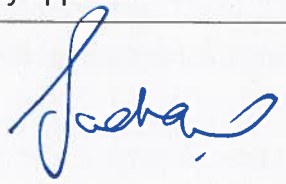
- expenditure of up to £616,000 to procure a planning back-office system, and associated licences, to run from 1 October 2026 to 30 September 2029 (with an option to extend to 30 September 2030)
- the GLA entering into the associated call-off contract with the chosen supplier, through to 30 September 2030.

The choice of supplier would be subject to successful completion of the G-Cloud direct award process.

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: 19/10/25

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

1.1. Under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the GLA Act), the Mayor is responsible for strategic planning in London. This includes keeping under review a spatial development strategy; reviewing strategically important planning applications through the referral process; and, if necessary, calling-in applications for their own determination.

1.2. In 2019, under Mayoral Decision MD2525 the GLA procured Arcus to replace its former in-house Planning Application Workflow System (PAWS). The Arcus planning back-office system went live in 2020; PAWS was subsequently decommissioned.

1.3. In 2022, under MD3044, the GLA entered into a further two-year contract for Arcus licences and storage. Under MD3293, the Mayor approved spending £280,800 for the licence period (1 October 2024 to 30 September 2026).

1.4. Since the initial contract award, Arcus has been developed to meet the unique needs of the Mayor's strategic planning service. It now provides a critical platform for the GLA's planning service. It supports the management of referable planning applications, pre-application advice, planning performance agreements, payments, documents, correspondence, monitoring and reporting. It is used by the Planning and Regeneration team; and by officers in other GLA and TfL teams who contribute to the statutory planning process.

1.5. The current contract expires on 30 September 2026. A replacement contract is therefore required to maintain continuity of the current services.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The key objective is to maintain a secure and reliable back-office system, through which the GLA can effectively and efficiently discharge its strategic planning functions; and collaborate with TfL and other contributing teams.

2.2. Expected outcomes are:

- continued operation of robust, auditable workflows across the GLA Planning Service's development-management functions
- continued and efficient shared access to planning referrals, case records and documentation for authorised GLA and TfL users
- continued online payment and case-management arrangements for chargeable planning services
- live operational and performance data that supports the monitoring, reporting and early identification of workload pressures
- retention of the efficiencies and service improvements already secured through Arcus, while further improvements are developed.

2.3. The renewal will also support:

- more transparent and consistent decision-making
- improved recording and reporting of planning outcomes

- faster internal consultation
- effective remote and agile working.

3. Equality comments

3.1. The GLA is subject to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In taking this decision, the Mayor must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2. This decision is intended to renew an internal business system; and is not expected to result in any differential or adverse impact on people with protected characteristics. Maintaining reliable workflows supports the timely and consistent delivery of the Mayor's planning functions. Accessibility and reasonable-adjustment requirements for staff will continue to be managed through the GLA's established policies and technology arrangements.

3.3. Officers will continue to monitor the operation and development of the system and address any equality or accessibility issues identified during the contract period.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Service continuity

4.1. If the contract is not renewed before the current term expires, the GLA could lose access to a system that is central to the statutory planning referral process and related services. This risk is mitigated by completing the approval, procurement and contract processes by 30 September 2026; and maintaining an implementation and continuity plan.

Supplier dependency and future procurement

4.2. Arcus has been configured around the GLA's specialist planning processes; this has created a degree of supplier dependency. The underlying platform is Salesforce, which reduces technical lock-in. The proposed extension gives time for officers to review requirements, market context and opportunities, and transition arrangements before the next procurement.

Commercial and contractual risk

4.3. A GCloud 14 competition tender was undertaken for the GLA Back-office system under lot 2 Cloud software. The result for the Glcoud14 word search competition process produced a list of suppliers which was further refined to reduce the list of supplies that would be assessed. The word search used was based on the requirements for the GLA Back-Office system and resulted in the GLA selecting Arcus after assessing the service definition (SD) and pricing documents listed on Gcloud as is required by the framework rules.

4.4. It is worth noting that only the services described in the suppliers' service definition documentation can be delivered, and the GLA had a conversation with the supplier pre-award to ascertain that the services required were covered off in their SD documentation.

4.5. The supplier terms provide for automatic renewal, unless notice is given at least 90 days before the end of the current term. The supplier also allows annual repricing by reference to framework list

prices, or a seven per cent uplift – whichever is higher. Officers will ensure that any executed order form and call-off terms clearly record the agreed price, term, extension mechanism, notice provisions, service levels, data-protection requirements and exit arrangements.

Information governance and cyber security

4.6. Arcus contains operational planning information and personal data. Existing access controls, role-based permissions, contract-management arrangements, data-protection controls and information-security assurance will continue. A data protection impact assessment and security documentation will be reviewed and updated where required.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.7. The ongoing delivery of the Planning Service sits within the Making Best Use of Land Programme. Arcus supports the processing, monitoring and determination of strategically important planning applications assessed against London Plan policies and therefore helps deliver the London Plan and the Mayor's housing, economic, environmental and inclusive-growth priorities.

Consultation and impact assessments

4.8. This decision is around continuing an established internal system. No additional public consultation or standalone impact assessment is required. Relevant procurement, information-governance, data-protection, cyber-security and accessibility assessments will be completed or refreshed as part of the contract process.

Conflicts of interest

4.9. Suppliers may also provide services to developers or planning authorities. The GLA controls access to its environment and data. Role-based permissions and supplier-management arrangements are in place to manage actual or perceived conflicts. No conflicts of interest have been identified for any officer involved in drafting or clearing this decision.

5. Financial comments

5.1. Approval is sought to spend up to £616,000 for a 36-month contract, with the option to extend this by 12 months. The confirmed annual profile and licence schedule will be inserted once the final order form has been agreed.

5.2. Spend will be funded from the Digitisation Programme Budget in Planning & Regeneration (£187,000 per annum); contributions or cost recovery from other users of the platform (including TfL); and, if required, pre-application planning reserves (up to £55,000). The proposed spending is financed by GLA resources – as agreed in the budget for 2026-27 financial year, and in the planned budget for future financial years.

5.3. The GLA Planning team will be responsible for managing the contract, monitoring licence usage and ensuring that expenditure remains within the approved amount. Any costs arising from activity outside the agreed scope must be contained within existing budgets; or be subject to further approval in accordance with the GLA's decision-making framework. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

6.1. The Mayor's strategic planning functions are set out in Part VIII of the GLA Act; and the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008. Section 30 of the GLA Act gives the GLA power to do anything it considers will further one or more of its principal purposes. Section 34 also permits the

GLA to do anything calculated to facilitate, or that is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any of its functions.

6.2. The award of the proposed contract is subject to the successful completion of the G-Cloud direct award process; and must be in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. However, renewing access to the system will support the efficient and effective exercise of the Mayor's strategic planning and environmental functions. It may therefore reasonably be regarded as facilitating, or being conducive or incidental to, those functions.

6.3. In taking the decision requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The relevant considerations are set out in section 3 of this report.

6.4. Officers must ensure that the contract includes appropriate provisions covering data protection, information security, confidentiality, intellectual property, service levels, liability, termination, exit assistance and return or deletion of GLA data. The supplier terms and order form must be reconciled with the applicable framework and call-off terms before signature.

6.5. The proposed 12-month extension is an option only. Any decision to exercise it must:

- be taken in accordance with the executed contract
- be within the spend approved by this decision
- follow confirmation of satisfactory performance, continuing need and available budget.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. Next steps are as follows:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	30 September 2026
Delivery start date	1 October 2026
Delivery end date	30 September 2030

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.

Strategic Programmes

Does this decision seek approval for activity falling within the remit of a programme delivery plan? YES

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within: Making Best Use Of Land

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

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: Joe Wilkinson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:	✓
Sponsoring Director: Phillip Graham has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.	✓
Mayoral Adviser: Jules Pipe has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.	✓
Advice: Finance and legal teams have commented on this proposal.	✓
Mayoral Delivery Board This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 28 September 2026.	

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature Fay Hammond **Date** 7 October 2026

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature D. Bellamy **Date** 5 October 2026