
Replacement of Audio-visual Equipment at Fire Stations

Report to
Corporate Services DB
Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board

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Report by
Chief Information Officer

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Summary

In 2016 the Brigade introduced standardised audio visual (AV) equipment at all fire stations. AV equipment includes large wall mounted screens, associated sound infrastructure and blu ray equipment. This equipment, installed in station lecture rooms, has been used for a wide variety of purposes including briefings and various training activities.

This report proposes replacing the existing equipment with a modern AV solution, allowing connectivity from a variety of sources including wireless and Bluetooth, so that laptops and tablets can be used to run presentations in a seamless way. This is similar to the AV solution that has been installed in meeting rooms at LFB Headquarters at Union Street.

Discussions are under way with colleagues in procurement to identify the best collaborative procurement framework to use and initial discussions have identified a number that may be suitable, and these are highlighted in paragraph 16 of the report.

Recommended decision

That the London Fire Commissioner approves the following :-

- I. The expenditure up to the value of £500k and an award of a contract, subject to completion of a successful procurement process, for the replacement of AV equipment at fire stations
- II. Entering into a support contract with the successful supplier for a period of 5 years (3-year contract term and an optional 2-year extension). This to be funded from existing approved ICT budgets at a cost of up to £235K for 5 years.

Background

1. In 2016 a procurement took place to install AV equipment in all fire stations. This included the providing the same modern equipment at each location, that could be used for a wide variety of purposes
2. The equipment is now over four years old and is approaching the end of its useful life. By introducing more modern equipment, fire stations will have the ability to make the best use of new technology, including the collaboration opportunities offered by products such as Microsoft Teams, delivered as part of Microsoft 365 within the Brigade's Modern Workplace Programme.

Scope of procurement

3. Fire stations currently have a range of audio-visual equipment, normally installed in the station lecture room. The equipment usually comprises a large screen, speakers and a DVD player. Typically, the equipment has been used for internal communication messages and training and is also available for station staff to use in their off-duty time.
4. Discussions with colleagues in the Training department have identified that there may be a requirement for enhanced ICT equipment at stations as part of an initiative to transform training delivery at stations, with emphasis on interactive training.
5. The procurement of ICT equipment to provide interactive training is outside of the scope of this procurement, which is based on a like-for-like replacement of AV equipment at stations. However, the AV equipment that we will be procuring will provide a solid foundation that will be capable of being developed further in future.
6. A proposal is currently being developed in relation to the provision of new equipment for Union Street, that will be required to support any future changes in ways of working, ie, enabling staff to be more mobile and not relying on a fixed desktop. An option will be built into this proposal to provide additional equipment for stations that would be needed to establish a more interactive training environment (examples could be installing PC's in each lecture room or investigating the use of tablets).

Costs

7. The exact cost for each station may vary due to several factors. The size of the room and therefore the corresponding size of the screens, the age of the station (some older stations can be more challenging to install equipment into).
8. Last year the Brigade carried out an AV refresh at the London Operations Centre (LOC) at Merton. Using the costs incurred for this refresh as a baseline and amending the specification to suit a "like for like" procurement as stations, it is estimated that the refresh of AV equipment could be undertaken for approximately £500k
9. A sum of £500K is contained within the approved capital plan for 2020/21. However, due to the impact of the current pandemic, particularly competing projects requiring access to stations and the requirement for staff and contractors to work in a safe environment, it is expected that the majority of the installation would take place in financial year 2021/22.
10. In the case of PFI stations, after discussions with colleagues in the property department, the approach will be to include these fire stations within the proposed procurement to ensure a common level of equipment across all stations. However, the equipment will be installed and subsequently maintained by the PFI provider.
11. Costs are based around a three-year contract for the supply and maintenance of the equipment and include an option to extend for a further two years. Budgetary provision of £235k already exists within ICT for maintaining AV equipment at stations (for up to 5 years), therefore no additional funding is required for the new equipment maintenance, once the warranty period expires.
12. The AV equipment is expected to have a life of 5 years.

Local Digital Declaration (LDD)

13. In May 2019, the London Fire Commissioner signed the [Local Digital Declaration](#) (LDD) on behalf of the LFC. The LDD which is signed by national and local government bodies, is seeking to co-create the conditions for the next generation of local public services, where technology is an enabler rather than a barrier to service improvements, and services are *"a delight for citizens and officials to use"*. It is acknowledged that one size doesn't fit all, but by developing common building blocks local authorities, and other public services, it will be possible to build services more quickly, flexibly and effectively. Only in this more open and flexible market, it is believed, will we unlock the full potential for innovation.
14. The LDD ambition requires both a culture shift and a technology shift and sets out five principles to help do this (available via the link above). In particular, and relevant to any new or replacement computer systems, including the mobilising solution, is principle 1 which is *"We will go even further to redesign our services around the needs of the people using them. This means continuing to prioritise citizen and user needs above professional, organisational and technological silos."*
15. A key issue, following LDD principles, will be to ensure that the needs of service users are fully met. Some engagement with such users may be appropriate as part of the project to replace the mobilising solution. For example, given the new ways (including via social media) that people

now want to communicate, it will be important, in deploying a new mobilising solution, that it has the capacity to embrace new communication channels.

Collaboration opportunities

16. Under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC has a duty to keep collaboration opportunities (with police and ambulance services) under review and, where it is in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness, to put those collaboration opportunities into practice. As referred to in the introduction to this paper, colleagues in procurement are currently examining a number of collaborative frameworks right across the public sector.
17. Use of the TfL ICT Resellers Framework is being considered, a firm decision cannot be made at present as a number of queries remain outstanding due to the Commercial Manager at TfL being on furlough. Contact has also been made with the GLA Collaborative Procurement Team to seek interest from other functional bodies who may have a similar requirement. They have confirmed that there are no collaborative agreements available for LFC to utilise and no interest in collaborating has been received from other functional bodies .
18. Other potential collaborative procurement routes that have been identified to date are the use of the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Technology Products & Associated Services Framework (TePAS), the NHS London Procurement Partnership (LPP) Information Management & Technology (IM&T) Framework, and the Pan London ICT Framework (Lot 4) that was tendered by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea on behalf of the London Public Sector as a collaborative framework.
19. Technology Products & Associated Services (TePAS) offers public sector buyers a flexible and compliant way to source all their technology product needs. This is the first iteration of the Technology Products framework to have associated services in its scope. 60.98% of the suppliers on this framework are a SME. The UK public sector and their associated bodies and agencies, including the voluntary sector and charities, can use this framework.
20. LPP has established the Information, Management & Technology (IM&T) Framework which consists of suitably experienced, capable, qualified and resourced suppliers available for use by NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups, GP services and other health and social care providers within the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, as well as local authorities and third sector organisations. The purpose of the framework is to provide a compliant route to market for each of the initiatives.
21. The Pan London ICT Framework (Lot 4) was tendered by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea on behalf of the London public sector. The aim of the framework is to deliver best value to London's public sector through a catalogue price structure, faster cost-effective procurement process and flexibility. The framework offers a catalogue of services by BT which is supported by several the market leading IT/communications vendors. This framework has offered an alternative route to market when there has not been a collaborative opportunity available via the GLA, or a suitable CCS framework. The framework also allows for a tender exercise to be carried out. Formal benchmarking is regularly undertaken by an external company against a minimum of eight top quartile peers and an overall 'value for money' rating has been awarded.

Conclusion

22. The provision of new AV for all Brigade stations will ensure that station-based staff have to the same level of modern technology provision as office-based staff. The equipment will be designed to be easy to operate and be reliable, backed up by a comprehensive support and maintenance

package. In addition, the new equipment will provide a solid foundation upon which additional functionality (such as inter-active training technology) could be added in future, should the Brigade decide to do so.

Finance comments

23. This paper proposes replacing the existing AV equipment at fire stations with a modern AV solution. The report notes that this is at an estimated cost of £500k which will be incurred over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. The capital programme includes funding of £500k for this work in 2020/21 and as a result the capital programme will need to be reprofiled to reflect the revised timelines set out in this report. If the £500k cost is funded through borrowing this will result in capital financing costs of £115k annually, including £100k minimum revenue provision for the repayment of principal and £15k in interest payments per annum based on an interest rate of 3%.
24. The report also notes that there will be an ongoing supplier contract for a period of five years at an estimated cost of £235k (for a 5-year period) , which will be contained within existing resources.

Workforce comments

25. No planned workforce consultation

Legal comments

26. 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. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, 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.
27. 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 Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor").
28. 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 as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...".
29. The Deputy Mayor's approval will be required for the Commissioner when it comes to any new procurement of AV equipment.
30. Furthermore, the proposed procurement of the AV equipment must be in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015
31. The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by section 7 (2)(a) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 under which the Commissioner must secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting. Furthermore under 7 (2)(b) of the aforementioned act the Commissioner must secure the provision of training for personnel

Sustainability implications

32. Any new procurement activity will need to be undertaken in line with the GLA group Responsible Procurement policy. As part of delivery of this policy, the Greater London Authority group is currently in the process of affiliating with Electronics Watch, which requires the inclusion of additional terms and conditions for contracts with significant hardware purchases. The terms aim to improve the transparency of the supply chain and management of any non-compliance with labour standards identified with the support of Electronics Watch. Where hardware replacement of considerable value forms part of the requirement for any of the options proposed, additional terms covering ethical sourcing will need to be included in the tender or re-negotiation

Equalities implications

33. The London Fire Commissioner and decision takers are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 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.
34. 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.
35. 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, Sexual orientation.
36. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us, in the exercise of all our functions (i.e. everything we do), to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
37. 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:
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) 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 (;
 - (c) 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.
38. 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.

39. 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—

- (a) tackle prejudice, and
- (b) promote understanding.

40. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken on 13 April 2020.

41. The impact assessment found outline positive impacts identified for those with disabilities, whereby the provision of enhanced visual and audio capability was thought to be of particular benefit to this group.

List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1.	None	

Consultation

Name/role	Method consulted
Head of Information	e-mail, meeting
Assistant Director - Training and Professional Development	e-mail
ICT Network Project Manager	
Supply chain manager, property	e-mail, telephone
Head of Stratgic Finance	e-mail
Solicitor – Corporate Commercial and Property Team	e-mail
ICT Network Team	e-mail