

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2821

Title: New GLA telephony service

Executive summary:

As part of a wider and emerging Contact Strategy, approval is sought for the implementation of a new telephony service for the GLA, to move away from desk-based telephones for staff and towards the use of corporate mobile phones and the Microsoft Teams software. The new service will also include decommissioning the onsite telephone infrastructure (PBX) and implementing a managed cloud-based equivalent.

These proposals will deliver a modern telephony service while reducing costs on an ongoing basis.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

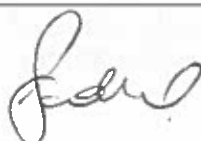
Expenditure of up to £150,000 as a one-off cost for the implementation of the new telephony service for the GLA.

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:

11/7/21

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The GLA is undergoing a major technology transformation centred around flexible working. Currently staff can work from any location using mobile technology, including Windows 10 laptops, Microsoft 365 software and corporate mobile phones.
- 1.2 However, the GLA's corporate telephony service is centred around desk and location-based operation and is largely the same as that implemented in 2002, when the GLA moved into City Hall.
- 1.3 Whilst this has served the GLA well, an aim of the Technology and Digital Strategy published in 2019-20 was the introduction of a new telephony service more aligned with the technology transformation of the GLA. Two other factors have highlighted the limitations of the current telephony service:
 - increased homeworking, as imposed by the pandemic
 - the GLA's future as a multi-site organisation that includes continued homeworking.
- 1.4 The services that have been most challenging to provide through remote working since March 2020 are the call-centre and helpdesk functions provided by Facilities Management (FM), the Public Liaison Unit (PLU) and the Technology Group. These rely on a specific type of call routing-system – automated call distribution (ACD) – for operators to manage incoming calls. The current ACD system is solely based around desk-based telephones.
- 1.5 Further, the current telecoms infrastructure will, if retained into the future, require significant upgrades (at additional cost) to:
 - bring and keep its core software fully up to date
 - mitigate against the telecoms industry's move away from legacy ISDN technology and into telecoms services based on session initiation protocol (SIP).
- 1.6 These upgrades would be more expensive than implementing the proposed new approach. They would also not enable the delivery of annual savings in the region of £50,000 that this proposal is expected to secure.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 This project will have the main objective of replacing the current corporate telephony service with a new one during 2021, and before the move out of City Hall is complete.
- 2.2 The new corporate telephony service will involve:
 - a secure, cloud-based infrastructure that is fully managed by the supplier, who will provide the full range of technical support and maintenance services
 - a full distributed ACD service that will allow all GLA call centres to work with operators working in multiple locations (including at home) and using their corporate mobile phones and laptops
 - the integration of Microsoft Teams with the ACD service for call-centre operations enabling operators to make external calls from within Teams
 - a new call-recording service that integrates with the cloud-based core telephony infrastructure, for use by the GLA call centres

- the retention of up to 200 direct-dial-in (DDI) numbers for essential operations that will enable external callers to use a traditional telephone number (which can be set up with call distribution services, for example, hunt groups and diverts) rather than individual mobile phone numbers; these numbers can be presented to either dedicated telephone landlines or Microsoft Teams
- the replacement of current ISDN telecoms links with the new standard of SIP
- a more comprehensive monitoring, management and reporting service than is currently possible.

2.3 Outside of call-centre operators, the telephony services used by GLA staff in general will involve:

- using Microsoft Teams for calling other GLA staff (either the Teams software on Surface Pro laptops, or the Teams app on GLA mobile phones)
- using GLA mobile phones for external calling.

2.4 On an exceptional basis – for example, the Mayor’s Office, Assembly Members and Corporate Management Team members – additional telephony facilities will be provided where required, including:

- a Microsoft Teams external calling service, on Surface Pro devices and mobile phones
- fixed telephone lines and handsets for emergency use.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being “relevant” protected characteristics).
- 3.2 Consultation work has been carried out with the PLU, FM and the GLA disability network to incorporate the needs of general staff and call-centre operators into the procurement.
- 3.3 There has also been consultation with the group working on the GLA Contact Strategy, led by the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications.
- 3.4 All consultees endorsed the approach adopted and agreed to play a part during the implementation of the new service.
- 3.5 User-group personas have been identified, and a series of interviews were conducted in the course of preparing the procurement documentation. The project will ensure that the telecoms needs of all GLA staff will be met.

4. Other considerations

Risks and issues

4.1 The following main risks have been identified during the formation of this project:

- There is the risk of disruption during the City Hall relocation project work. To mitigate this, the telephony project will be tightly integrated into the relocation project.

- There is also the risk of individuals catching Covid-19 owing to social distancing not being possible. It will be mandatory that any physical works (which should be minimal) will take place in accordance with social distancing requirements in force at the time. Where this is not possible, work will be rescheduled to a more appropriate time.
- Much of the training in the new system will be remote, and there is a risk that understanding of the new system may be poorer than would be the case with onsite, hands-on training. As mitigation, the training will be more of an ongoing exercise, spread over a long period, to ensure enough understanding.
- Given that the solution requires the integration of a telephony system with a third-party product (Microsoft Teams), there is a risk that changes in Teams software may have an impact on the telephony service. As a mandatory part of the procurement, the supplier will be required to demonstrate their experience and ability to keep pace with such technologies and changes.
- Any move to a fully mobile phone-based service risks disruption owing to weak signal strength, particularly in office buildings. As mitigation, there will be a mobile signal survey of the Crystal building and signal-booster equipment will be installed if necessary, to enhance coverage in all staff and meeting areas of GLA buildings.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 This project is part of the GLA Contact Strategy.
- 4.3 This project supports and delivers on several aims contained in the current Technology and Digital Strategy, namely:
- a new telephony strategy that minimises desktop telephony
 - the establishment of a technology environment that supports and enables flexible working
 - taking a cloud-first approach for infrastructure.

Project approach

- 4.4 The project will be managed by the GLA Technology Group.
- 4.5 The main stages of the project will be:
- implementing the cloud-based ACD service, including procuring the necessary licences
 - allocating the required DDI numbers for use on MS Teams
 - implementing the MS Teams external-calling features for the call-centre operators and others as required, and integrating this with the ACD
 - installing/retaining additional fixed telephone lines and handsets where required, for example, for emergency use
 - issuing guidance to staff on changes and training
 - removing desk telephones
 - decommissioning and removing the desk-based telephony infrastructure, including telephone lines no longer required. These will either be sold to the current GLA telecoms supplier for reconditioning and reuse or recycled via the GLA's recycling supplier. If recycled, the GLA recycling supplier contract requires that all data is securely deleted and that the environment is not harmed as a result.

Procurement

- 4.6 The procurement of a supplier will be through the Crown Commercial Service RM3808 framework, which is a specialist framework for telecoms and telephony services.
- 4.7 The procurement will be led by a TfL procurement manager and will adhere to the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code.
- 4.8 A market-testing exercise was carried out between July and October 2020, which guided the estimation of the likely costs as well as the production of the procurement specifications.
- 4.9 There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of the decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Mayoral approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £150,000 for the procurement of a supplier to implement a new telephony service for the GLA.
- 5.2 The expenditure will be funded from the Technology Group 2021-22 Budget.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the GLA's exercise of its powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the discharge of its principal purposes, and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, and health inequalities between persons; and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely, the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 Should the Mayor be minded to make the decisions sought, officers must ensure that the services and supplies required are procured in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code, engaging with TfL Procurement to develop and follow an agreed procurement strategy and appropriate contracts are entered into and executed by the GLA and contractors before the commencement of the works, goods or services required.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	Ends 9 August 2021

Announcement	10 August 2021
Delivery start date	16 August 2021
Delivery end date	29 October 2021
Project closure	10 December 2021

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 either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES

If YES, for what reason: To preserve confidentiality of budgets during the procurement.

Until what date: 1 August 2021

Part 2 - Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under 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:

Duminda Baddevithana has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

David Gallie has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

David Bellamy has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 28 June 2021.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

D. Gallie

Date

30 June 2021

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature

D. Bellamy

Date

1 July 2021

