

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2185

Title: Procurement of fire safety consultant

Executive Summary:

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower last summer, the GLA requires a fire safety consultant to provide specialist advice and expertise to advise on and support the following workstreams:

- the Mayor's response to the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (due in late May 2018);
- further development and refinement of the fire safety policies in the draft London Plan;
- engagement with public debate around technical issues such as fire doors, desktop studies and sprinklers; and
- responding to any emerging fire safety recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services approves:

- expenditure of up to £30,000 within 2018/19 on the services of a fire safety consultant (this expenditure is estimated based on four days per month at a daily rate of £825).

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Jamie Ratcliff

Position: Assistant Director – Programme, Policy and Services

Signature:



Date:



PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. On 14 June 2017 a fire at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington led to the deaths of 71 people. The Mayor has been clear that he will do everything in his power to understand what caused the fire, support the justice process for those affected and ensure a tragedy like this never happens again. In order to effectively support him in this aim, the GLA must ensure it has the appropriate skills and knowledge. As such, the GLA is seeking to procure a fire safety consultant to provide specialist advice and expertise.
- 1.2. A consultant is currently in place but nearing contract completion. The contract was awarded via single source route, authorised by a delegated authority record (DAR) in January 2018. This decision was taken under the justification that expertise was needed urgently but a long-term solution would be procured to continue this work. This assistant director decision (ADD) provides for that longer-term solution.
- 1.3. Dame Judith Hackitt has been commissioned by Government to undertake an Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. The Mayor submitted evidence to this in autumn 2017 and responded to the interim report in early 2018. Although the GLA does not have a formal role to play in building control, the Mayor has a strategic interest in this work on the basis that it underpins the safety of high rise buildings in which many Londoners live. The final report is due in late May 2018.
- 1.4. Following this report, Government will release its plans to implement these recommendations. The GLA will need to respond to these implementation plans and shape them to ensure they are as effective as possible.
- 1.5. In his draft London Plan the Mayor introduced a policy (D11) requiring new development proposals to go beyond the minimum and achieve the highest standards of fire safety to ensure the safety of all building users. The aim is to ensure at planning stage that development proposals have considered fire safety issues and built them into the plans for the building. Technical expertise will be needed to support the development and refinement of this policy as it progresses through the London Plan process.
- 1.6. Findings and recommendations from phase one of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry are expected at the end of 2018 or beginning of 2019. The Mayor may wish to respond to these recommendations and support London boroughs and other stakeholders in implementation. This work will require technical expertise on building regulations and fire safety.
- 1.7. In addition to the above, expertise is required to enable the GLA to actively participate and engage with public debate around technical issues on fire and building safety, such as fire doors, desktop studies and sprinklers. The GLA is seeking an expert with the following skills, knowledge and experience. The individual should:
 - be a qualified engineer with relevant experience in fire safety and a chartered engineer registered with the Engineering Council by the Institution of Fire Engineers;
 - have a good knowledge of the Building Regulations, the regulatory system surrounding Building Control and the Fire Regulatory Reform (safety) Order;
 - have a good knowledge of the planning process and framework;
 - have significant knowledge of residential developments; and
 - have experience of working at a high level, in a political environment.

- 1.8. This consultant will be procured through a competitive tender using a TfL framework (MDS Lot B3 Fire and Safety Engineering).

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. Procurement of this consultant will provide accurate, independent, and up to date advice on technical matters relating to fire safety and building regulations to inform GLA appraisals of Mayoral policy options. It will also ensure the GLA's positions on fire safety issues are credible and accurate.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. This proposal seeks to provide greater expertise to the GLA on the matter of fire safety. This expertise will ensure that the Mayor advocates for and implements fire safety policies which are ambitious, technically sound and implementable. Policies of this kind will ensure fire risks are mitigated and new buildings have appropriate and accessible means of evacuation, with particular consideration given to vulnerable building users. This proposal is therefore likely to have a positive impact on those Londoners with protected characteristics for whom fire safety issues are particularly relevant, either because they are more vulnerable (for example, older people or those with disabilities) or because they are more likely to occupy buildings requiring a greater degree of fire safety scrutiny (for example, tall buildings).

4. Other considerations

Risks and issues

- 4.1. Without a fire consultant, there is risk that the Mayor's fire safety policies will not be informed by technical expertise. This may jeopardise the efficacy of these policies or mean it is difficult to implement, both for the GLA and external partners.
- 4.2. If expertise on fire safety is not procured as set out in this proposal, the lack of expertise among existing staff may mean lobbying positions are not technically accurate or underpinned by operational competence. This poses a reputational risk to the Mayor in his efforts to communicate and influence Government and other partners.
- 4.3. The fire engineering sector is currently in high demand due to the widespread need for this expertise in the wake of the Grenfell fire. It may be difficult to find an adequately qualified individual or they may be charging higher rates than normal in response to this scarcity.

Links to Mayor strategies and priorities

- 4.4. A key priority for the appointment of this consultant is the delivery, development, and refinement the fire safety policies (D3 and D11) in the draft London Plan.
- 4.4. Policy 5.1 in draft London Housing Strategy states that "London's new and existing homes and neighbourhoods should be well-designed, safe, good quality and environmentally sustainable". More specifically, proposal 5.1B commits to "working to strengthen fire safety in existing homes".
- 4.4. Issues relating to Grenfell are a priority for the Mayor. This is demonstrated through his role as a core participant in the Public Inquiry and previous submissions made on his behalf to Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

Impact assessments and consultations

N/a

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The total cost is expected to be £30,000 in 2018/19 for the services of a fire safety consultant from May 2018 for a period of 9 months (this estimate is based on four days per month at a daily rate of £825). Funding to be transferred from the central programme budget to Housing and Land.
- 5.2 A DAR for up to £9,900 plus VAT was approved to appoint specialist fire expertise on a short term interim basis as a matter of urgency from January – April 2018 via a single source route. The costs were met within the Development, Enterprise and Environment directorate

6. Legal Comments

Legal comments are not required on this decision.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	May
Start of contract	Late May
Ad hoc advice and expertise provided	June 2018 – March 2019
End of contact	29 March 2019

Appendices and supporting papers: None.

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 either be published 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? YES**

Publication of this approval will be delayed until the contract has been awarded. It can be published on or after 1 June 2018.

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 –NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**Drafting officer:**

Megan Life has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and –if relevant- Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

Corporate Investment Board:

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on Monday 14 May 2018.

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

15-05-18

