

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE AND RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD161

Title: Procurement of End-User Computer Devices

Executive summary:

This report seeks authority to commit expenditure for the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to replace various London Fire Brigade (LFB) end-user computing devices that have reached the end of their useful life and will no longer be supportable going forward. This equipment includes both desktop and mobile devices. Devices that are end-of-life pose challenges in terms of supportability, and are at increased risk of becoming infected with malware as there are often no further security updates available. In addition, the user experience degrades over time as some new features of software releases may not be available on older devices.

The proposal is for LFB to enter into a call off-arrangement split into three lots for the supply of end-user computer hardware that covers peripherals in support of the home-working initiative, the reorganisation of Union Street and equipment-replacement cycles over a three-year contract. These lots would enable the replacement purchase of 'zero client' devices at stations, and a mechanism to order additional hardware, as required, to replace devices that have reached the end of their useful life. A 'zero client' model means there is no software installed on the local device. All of the computing power is centralised in a number of servers, with the 'zero client' connecting to these servers remotely. This report requests the Deputy Mayor to authorise the LFC to commit expenditure up to the value contained in Part 2 of this report, following completion of a procurement exercise, for the purpose of entering into a contract for end-user computer devices, for a three-year period.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the LFC 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...".

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience authorises the LFC to commit expenditure of up to the value contained in Part 2 of this report, following completion of a procurement exercise, for the purpose of entering into a contract for end-user computer devices, for a three-year period.

Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

16/5/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Report LFC-0667y to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) sets out the background for the request to approve expenditure for London Fire Brigade (LFB). The LFC adopted a 'thin client' computing architecture several years ago; this has evolved over time, with over 2,200 devices deployed at a number of sites, including at fire stations where devices are shared between station-based staff. The thin-client model differs from a traditional PC-based model in that there is little intelligence in the local device. Instead, all the computing power is centralised in a number of centrally based servers with the thin clients connecting to these servers remotely. This model has subsequently evolved into a 'zero client' model – meaning no software, other than device management tools, is installed on the local device. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, office-based staff have now been issued with a personal tablet/laptop and other peripheral equipment to allow flexible working at home or in the office, instead of using a zero-client terminal in the office.
- 1.2 Aside from office-based staff, the zero-client desktop will remain in use for the foreseeable future as it still provides the most cost-effective means of delivering software and applications to any location with a small ICT support team. The solution now delivers over 150 applications to users. Zero-client devices still provide the most cost-effective solution for staff with a fixed base – such as fire stations, where alternative solutions are now in place for mobile working through Windows tablets and mobile data terminals on firefighting appliances.
- 1.3 The current zero-client devices (10Zig) in use across LFB were procured in 2016. They are now reaching the end of their supportable life, and require upgrading to the next generation. While recent changes at LFB Headquarters to support more flexible working patterns have resulted in large numbers of devices being removed, with staff using personally issued tablets and laptops as a tactical response to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is still a requirement for the replacement over 1,600 zero-client devices at fire stations and other office sites. While 350 staff have recently been issued with a personal tablet/laptop, a significant number of laptops/tablets (1,600) were already in use before the new roll-out.
- 1.4 LFB's ICT department has an established three-year rolling replacement programme for the replacement of these devices, to ensure that they are kept up to date; can receive regular updates; and can be maintained. With these multiple requirements (laptops/tablets and zero-client devices), the proposed approach is to combine them together in a single procurement and benefit from a shared approach. Therefore, the proposal is for LFB to enter into a call-off arrangement split into three lots for: the supply of end-user computer hardware covering peripherals in support of the home working initiative; the reorganisation of Union Street; and equipment-replacement cycles over a three-year contract. These lots would enable the replacement purchase of zero-client devices at stations, and a mechanism to order additional hardware, as required, to replace devices that have reached the end of their useful life.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The proposal supports the strategic intent for transformation in the workplace (e.g. flexible working) and will allow LFB to evolve and meet the challenges of the future. By providing end-user

equipment that is up to date and supported, and that meets user requirements, outcomes such as flexible working and collaboration can be achieved and enable real transformation.

- 2.2 This proposal also supports the ever-increasing need to ensure ICT systems are secured against all forms of cyber-attack and malicious activities. End-user devices, such as tablets/laptops, that are no longer able to receive security updates can pose a significant threat to LFB infrastructure.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 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.

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed in relation to this procurement. The EIA has overall shown a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics. However, there were positive outcomes for staff with disabilities. The new devices have Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 software installed, which provides accessibility tools to enhance access for users with disabilities. The devices would also allow access to the LFB Citrix desktop, providing everyone with access to specific software designed to help staff with disabilities. In addition, the ability for staff to opt for a tablet, rather than a laptop device, means the devices are easier to transport as the tablets weigh just 1.17 kilograms, which may be beneficial to those staff with certain physical disabilities.

4. Other considerations

Workforce comments

- 4.1 As the report is to replace existing devices with modern alternatives, there are no plans for consultation beyond the governance process. LFB's Chief Information Officer will ensure that a relevant communication plan is in place to inform all staff of the logistics and timing of replacement equipment.

Sustainability and procurement implications

- 4.2 Any new procurement activity will need to be undertaken in line with the GLA Group Responsible Procurement policy. As part of the delivery of this policy, the GLA Group has affiliated with Electronics Watch, an independent monitoring organisation that unites public-sector buyers with experts in human rights and global supply chains. This affiliation 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 renegotiation.
- 4.3 A number of frameworks have been considered for use to tender this requirement, and a decision has been made to use the London Procurement Partnership's Information, Management and Technology Framework. This consists of suitably experienced, capable, qualified and resourced suppliers available for use by local authorities and third-sector organisations as well as NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups, GP services, and other health and social care providers within the UK. This framework offers suitable terms and conditions, competitive rates, and a sufficient number of value-added resellers to encourage competition. It is also accessible to the LFC.
- 4.4 Collaboration with the National Fire Chiefs Council for a Crown Commercial Service aggregation has been considered. However, on further investigation, the timescales do not align and nor does the contract duration. Therefore, this option has been discounted. Collaboration with the GLA was

investigated; however, confirmation was received that it does not have a contract available to LFB for the items required.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This report recommends that a contract is entered into for the provision of end-user computer devices over a three-year period. The financial cost and funding for this is set out in Part 2 of this report. These costs can be met from provisions made in LFB's current capital strategy; this will require some reprofiling of the budgets established for the next six years, as the interruption in the replacement programme over the past two years has caused some misalignment. The cost of the project as a result of the interruption of the replacement programme can be met from the underspend in the capital project to provide replacement audio-visual facilities at fire stations.
- 5.2 The exact cost may vary due to several factors, including general market conditions and exchange rates, but estimates based on current market costs of the equipment are set out in Part 2 of this report.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC 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 LFC specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.
- 6.2 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the LFC would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the Deputy Mayor).
- 6.3 Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the LFC 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...". The decision to purchase new end-user computer devices for the value set out at Part 2, which exceeds the financial threshold referred to above, will therefore require approval from the Deputy Mayor.
- 6.4 The proposed recommendation is also for the LFC to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial to make final award of contracts, which is permitted under Part 4 of the LFC Scheme of Governance.
- 6.5 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004). Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 2004 the LFC has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting. Section 5A also allows the LFC to do anything incidental or indirectly incidental to his functional purposes.

- 6.6 The report confirms the relevant end-user computer devices will be procured via a call-off framework under the London Procurement Partnership Information, Management and Technology Framework Agreement, which is permitted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 6.7 Up-to-date end-user computer devices will enable Brigade staff to operate effectively and efficiently in their day-to-day role.
- 6.8 These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC's General Counsel Department in report LFC-0667 to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

Part 1 of Report LFC-0667y- Procurement of End-User Computer Devices

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? No

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 – YES

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer

Richard Berry has drafted this report with input from the LFC and in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

_ has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience for approval.

✓

Advice

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

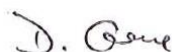
A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 16 May 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

16/5/22