

Request for Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) Decision – GLRO21-08

Title: Additional Technology Provision and Assurance for the 2021 Mayor of London and London Assembly elections e-Count

Executive Summary:

The GLRO's approval is sought for further funding to support the electronic vote-counting process (e-count), outside of the requirements of the main contract with the e-count supplier CGI which was agreed by GLRO Decision 20-05, and subsequently modified by GLRO Decision 21-01 to accommodate the election postponement.

Additional internet connectivity is required (£25,000). The count sites and City Hall must be able to connect and communicate with each other. Two dedicated lines which were initially provisioned for by GLRO Decision 20-11 must be renewed in light of postponement of the election. Also, each count centre shall be enhanced with a 4G connection, to supplement the primary connections and enhance resilience. The additional 4G connections shall be provided through CGI, after a change control agreement.

Supplementary technical assurance and testing is required (£25,000). Expert independent technical assurance is to review the e-count infrastructure tests, which shall be provided by a third-party (not the current e-count provider) with whom the GLA currently has a call-off contract. The exact scope of work will be determined by the company's initial feedback.

Accordingly, £50,000 is requested and this form seeks the GLRO's approval for these activities. The requisite funds have been budgeted for.

Decision:

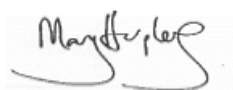
That the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO):

Approves further expenditure of up to £50,000 to cover the extra costs needed for the extension and provision of resilient connectivity between sites, and technical assurance to the e-count.

Greater London Returning Officer

The above request has my approval.

Signature



Date

22 March 2021

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. GLRO 20-05 approved the award of the contract to CGI IT UK in partnership with Smartmatic for the supply of an electronic ballot paper counting system, and other electoral materials and services. While the e-Count hardware is largely provided for by CGI, peripheral infrastructure is required from the GLA.
- 1.2. The decision of Government last year to postpone the election resulted in an extension of the contract with CGI.
- 1.3. As per GLRO 20-11, signed on 12 November 2019, dedicated Internet connections were installed at City Hall to allow the technical infrastructure of the e-count system to securely and reliably connect with the three count centres. The initial GLRO decision only covered connectivity for the original election date, and so must be extended.
- 1.4. The technical setup in City Hall was contracted with a 4G backup connection. The three Count Sites were not originally envisaged to have this backup. In order to improve the resilience of the Count Sites these should now be provisioned.
- 1.5. CGI are already required to conduct penetration testing, to the National Cyber Security Council (NCSC)'s CHECK standards. To enhance the ability of the GLA to review this testing and review performance, ensure compliance with the required remediations, and to provide additional confidence in the performance of the system, additional resources via third-party testing are required.
- 1.6. The services detailed within shall be procured through existing call-off contracts and agreements, as they are extensions of existing work, and further, this will reduce risk and increase timeliness. In line with this, the contract awarded through GLRO 20-05 shall be amended to facilitate the additional 4G connections, through the approved change control process.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The e-count central site, hosted in City Hall, and count venues, will be reliably connected with internet connectivity.
- 2.2. Increased confidence in the correct performance and integrity of the system.

3. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 3.1. Reliance: The e-count is a key part of the electoral process, and is required to run in a manner which is reliable. Accordingly, a variety of contingency measures are being considered. Amongst them, is the need to have two internet lines, to provide for a fall back.
- 3.2. Security: The security of the e-counting system is of paramount importance to the election. Accordingly, rigorous oversight is required.

4. Equality comments

- 4.1. There are no specific impacts on those with protected characteristics arising out of this decision, as per the public sector equality duty.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. GLRO approval is being sought for further expenditure of up to £50,000 to cover the extra costs for extending the internet lines and enhancing resilience at the venues (up to £25,000) and for technical testing assurance purposes (up to £25,000). These costs are outlined in section 1 above.
- 5.2. This brings the total budget and expenditure approval for internet connections to £67,000 (original budget approved was to up £17,000 via GLRO-20-11 plus this new budget of £50,000).
- 5.3. The total cost of up to up to £50,000 will be funded from the Elections budget.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The proposals are consistent with and support the activities of the GLRO in the 2021 GLA elections.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Action	Date
Approve decision	March 2021
Engage Third Party Assurance (under existing contracts)	March 2021
Third Party Review	March 2021
Review Remediations	March-April 2021
Install Additional Internet Provisions	March-May 2021
Polling day	6 May 2021

Appendices and supporting papers:
GLRO-20-11

Public access to information

Although the GLRO is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act), the information in this form will be published 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 will be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods will 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**

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice whose publication may be prejudicial or commercially sensitive should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

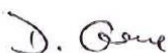
Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:	
	Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)
Drafting officer: <u>Ajay Patel</u> has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the <u>Finance and Legal</u> teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.	✓
The Deputy GLRO has reviewed the request and is satisfied that it is correct and can be referred to the GLRO for approval	✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

22 March 2021