LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Facilitating Flexible Working for Staff at Union Street HQ

Executive Summary

Since the lockdown in March 2020, most of the Brigade staff who are normally based at Brigade Headquarters (HQ) have been working from home. ICT have provided a range of equipment to staff, ranging from laptops to tablets and associated peripherals, as a tactical response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposals in this paper supports and facilitates the proposals from the Assistant Director, Property in her report *"Opening Up Fire Stations: Workplace hubs"*.

It is clear that the Brigade needs to re-think ICT service provision to make it flexible enough to fit into and support the different working arrangements being considered by the Brigade. The objective is to provide modern equipment that allows our staff in HQ to be more flexible, working from home and a range of other locations in a safe and sustainable way. The initial roll-out of the new equipment proposed can be delivered from within existing capital programme in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

This change in approach should be viewed as a facilitator for other initiatives which may provide both efficiencies and the opportunity for cashable savings, although some support costs will need funding identified. If the Brigade does not make the changes outlined in this paper, then there will be new ways of working and communication initiatives that it will not be possible to deliver or support.

Recommended decisions

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner agrees to commit capital expenditure of up to £900K for new equipment described in this report to allow better flexible working by staff, subject to the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience prior approval.

I. The London Fire Commissioner agrees to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Technical and Commercial Services, to award the contracts for the new equipment following any procurement exercise..

II. The London Fire Commissioner agrees to the consequential revenue cost of £159,375 per annum plus inflationary increases in line with the contract requirements for additional equipment and software

items added to three existing contract arrangements, which are both within the existing budget and the terms of the contract.

Introduction and Background

1. In 1999 the Brigade moved from shared PCs all linked to central servers to a 'thin client' model delivering a managed desktop to all office-based users; fire station staff share 'thin client' terminals. This solution has evolved over time and allowed the Brigade to grow the number of supported devices to over 2,200 'thin clients' terminals distributed across Brigade locations, including at fire stations.

2. The 'thin client' desktop will remain in use for the foreseeable future as it still provides the most cost effective means of delivering applications to any location with a very small support team. The original solution has evolved significantly since its inception and now delivers over 150 applications to users and utilises zero client devices, meaning no software, other than device management tools is installed locally. These 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 appliance tablets and Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs).

3. Whilst the fixed terminal solution could be extended to homes there are some limitations particularly around mobile working. In recent years, the Brigade has invested significantly in tablet computers which, combined with our remote access solution, provides staff with the flexibility to access the thin client desktop from anywhere.

4. The Brigade's Modern Workplace Programme – delivering a Windows 10 desktop and Microsoft 365 – has the potential to transform ways of working. This programme, along with others such as the audio visual refresh at fire stations, will provide an opportunity to make the best use of new technology, including the collaboration and communications opportunities offered by products such as Microsoft Teams, delivered as part of Microsoft 365.

5. To support the strategic intent for transformation in the workplace, it is clear that we need to re-think ICT service provision to make it flexible enough to fit into whatever working scenario is adopted by the Brigade. The objective will be to provide modern equipment that allows our staff to be more flexible, working in the office, from home and a range of other locations, in a safe and sustainable way

6. The original objective of this report was to provide new equipment for staff based at Brigade HQ. However, as the report has been working through its governance process, further work has been undertaken in respect to the number of devices that could be procured with the £900K capital funding. As a result, we would now be able to provide devices for station based station commanders and some staff in area offices.

7. A key aspect of this proposal is to leverage the investment in equipment already in place and, where possible, to maintain a consistent hardware estate and compatibility with existing kit, which will greatly aid the support function.

8. ICT have provided a number of devices to staff to assist with working from home since the original lockdown in March 2020. However, the Chief Information Officer has notified Heads of Service that there is no further central financial provision for further equipment. Whilst this paper is under consideration, departments will have to fund any requests for additional equipment.

The next step in flexible working from an ICT perspective

9. In order to change the way the Headquarters building at Union Street is used, the Assistant Director, Property has been working on a proposal to reduce the Brigade footprint in the building and creates a more flexible workspace (her report *"Opening Up Fire Stations: Workplace hubs")*. The ICT environment needs to adapt and change to support any new flexible ways of working. A 'persona' describing a member of staff working flexibly – in the style used in the Brigade's Information and Technology Strategy *LFB in a Digital World*, is attached as an annex to this report, and describes the new way of working.
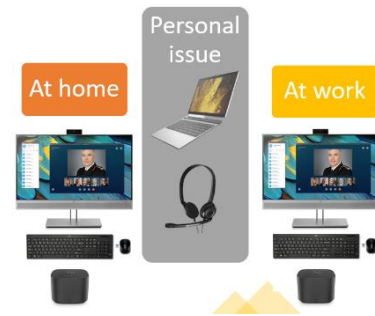
10. The proposal, which we have been working on with colleagues from property, is to provide all staff based at Headquarters with a Brigade issued tablet or laptop and carry case) and headset and to provide the equipment to allow this to be used at workstations at Union Street and at home. The proposal is to install docking stations into existing work spaces at Union Street (subject to social distancing requirements) and to personally issue staff with a display screen, keyboard and mouse for use at home.

11. In considering this solution we have identified the need for simple connectivity capability, at home and in the office, which would be provided by a docking station that is capable of supporting either a laptop or a tablet and is compatible with our existing investment. Given the new ways of working, conferencing facilities that deliver minimum disruption to others (e.g. by using a headset) is required as is portability, ease of use and a small desktop footprint. In addition, to improve communication with all staff, the deployment of conferencing facilities to all sites and meeting spaces will require the addition of a Microsoft Teams room licence for these locations.

12. Staff will have the ability to use video conferencing via Microsoft teams on their device at work (as they do at home). In addition, the intention will be to provide facilities for staff to use their new tablet/laptop to make and receive telephone calls (via unified communications software). This will negate the requirement for large numbers of desktop telephones to be retained or additional mobile phones to be issued, and obviating the need for staff to use personal mobile or landline phones for work purposes. This 'unified communications' is currently subject to technical evaluation, which will confirm an appropriate way forward.

Costs

13. There are several elements that make up the total cost of the proposed solution:

- Equipment purchase costs (capital)
- Support contract additional costs (revenue)
- In-house support costs (revenue)

Equipment purchase costs

14. The exact cost may vary due to several factors including general market conditions and exchange rates but estimates are based on current market costs of the equipment as set out in the table below.

TABLE 1: EQUIPMENT PURCHASE COSTS (CAPITAL)	
Devices (tablets or laptops)	£ 227,220
Monitors	£ 257,625
Desk Set Up	£ 287,537
Headphones	£31,800
Contingency – Disposal / Price Variation / Volume Changes / Delivery Costs	£95,819
Total equipment purchase	**£ 900,000**

Support – additional costs

15. There is a range of additional costs to support the extra equipment as outlined in the table below. There are three different existing contracts (i.e. contracts covering 'break-fix', mobile data and Microsoft software) that provide the flexibility to vary the volumes of items covered within the terms of those contracts. The Brigade's Procurement team have confirmed that the current contracts can be varied. The contract to provide third-party support for hardware (i.e. 'break/fix') does not cover minor items, like headsets, cabling, etc., for which budget provision is made. Cost estimates have been prepared for the support elements of this proposal in accordance with current contract rates for these services and are detailed below.

TABLE 2: SUPPORT COSTS (REVENUE)		
Contract 1 - 'break/fix' provider	Devices and monitors	£48,347
Contract 2 – mobile data	Connectivity - mobile SIMs	£38,592
Contract 3 – software licensing	Licensing (MS Teams, incl room licences)	£41,991
Budget provision	Provision for loss/breakage minor items	£30,445

16. These additional costs can be met by repurposing the existing desktop and server budgets.

In-house support costs (revenue)

17. The large number of devices in use means that the in-house support workload will be greater. These devices require software management as they will require regular software updates. As a consequence, the in-house teams providing this support will need to be augmented by an additional support engineer (FRS D). This is based on the recent experience gained in supporting a remote workforce (during the Covid lock-down) and the change in the equipment base that provides a more complex environment to support.

TABLE 3: IN-HOUSE SUPPORT (REVENUE)	No	Unit Cost	Annual Cost
2nd Level Support - FRS D	1	£47,413	**£ 47,413**

18. This post is already established and this growth can be contained within existing ICT staffing resources by undertaking a minor restructuring using the existing delegated authority.

Continuing need for some 'thin client' terminals at HQ

19. The current thin client equipment is due for renewal in 2021/22 and this proposal, if approved, will change that requirement. It will reduce the overall deployment of thin client terminals by approximately 600 devices (28 per cent of the estate). This change has been reflected in the revised Capital programme set out below. There will be a need to retain some 'thin client' terminal capability at Union Street to ensure that any LFB user visiting from another location will still be able to access their desktop; the location of these devices is still to be determined.

Consequence of not agreeing this proposal

20. The Covid lock-down has underlined the need to equip staff based at Headquarters to work in a more flexible way. It is clear that going forward, the Brigade needs to support its staff to work flexibly at any Brigade location, and from home (or other non-LFB location). The provision of fixed 'thin client' workstations across the HQ building does not provide that flexibility, and many staff working from home are having to rely on personal devices for work purposes, including personal phones for making work calls. The standard of personal equipment staff are using at home varies, leading to a range of different issues accessing Brigade systems remotely. During lock-down, the Brigade has tactically provided equipment for some staff who were not equipped to work from home (e.g. they have never needed to use remote access, share computers at home with others in the household). The proposition in this paper provides a level playing field for all HQ staff and ensures that they have modern similar equipment that will support Brigade systems, including Microsoft 365, and will significantly improve the way many staff are able to work from home.

21. If the proposition in this paper is not agreed, then we :

- might fail achieve full legal compliance with the relevant regulations (including Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

- could limit the ability of top managers, and supervisors to communicate effectively with all staff.

- might impact on the ability of some staff to work effectively from home.

- might need to put in place support for those staff that need to receive and make external phone calls as part of their work, and who are currently using personal phones.

Capital Funding

22. The equipment purchase costs of this proposal (i.e. £900,000) can be fully funded from four projects within the existing capital programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22 by adjusting the existing programme of work.

TABLE 4: CAPITAL PROGRAMME FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASE			
Project	**Impact of change**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**
Replacement of laptops	Planned replacement of laptops will be deferred to 2021/22 with the life of the deployed equipment extended. There is already existing provision in 2021/22 capital plan for the replacement of fire safety mobile working devices for which a specialist build would need to be developed for the new equipment which can still progress. The impact on deployment is minimal.	£300,000	
Virtual desktop technology (VDT)	The impact of redirecting this spend will be minimal as the change of circumstances this year did not allow for the planned expenditure and this solution changes the approach in any event.	£250,000	
Thin client terminal replacement	600 fewer terminals, if the proposal in this paper is agreed which will reduce capital provision by £385,000 (£115,000 provision reduced to £764,000).		£385,000
Fat PC replacement	Provision no longer needed, as the proposal in this report avoids the need to replace PCs.		£100,000
	Total (across two years)		**£1,035,000**

23. The changes in this table are fully reflected in the adjustments to the capital programme/strategy in table 5 below.

24. The equipment deployed as part of this proposal will need to be replaced in the future with the life of the tablets being three years (in 2023/24) and the desktop setup (e.g. screen, keyboard) in five years (in 2026/27). This replacement cost is partially offset by the reduction in the future refresh of 'thin client' equipment (every six years). The increase in the number of devices deployed since the capital strategy was last updated means there will be an increased requirement to cover replacement of equipment when life expired.

25. The changes described above are reflected in the table below for seven years, whilst this is partially offset by this proposal which will deliver a reduced requirement in the Capital Plan in the medium term (by 2026/27) of £157,675. There is an additional requirement of £218,000 in the period for the overall programme for the replacement of desktop equipment.

Table 5: CAPITAL STRATEGY ADJUSTMENTS							
EXISTING CAPITAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS 2020/21							
	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s	2026/27 £000s
Replacement of laptops	300	300	300	300	358	369	380
Virtual desktop technology	250	-	-	-	0	0	0
New terminals - thin client	-	1,150	-	-	0	0	1,952
New terminals - fat client	-	100	-	-	0	0	0
Total	**550**	**1,550**	**300**	**300**	**358**	**369**	**2,332**
REVISED CAPITAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS							
	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s	2026/27 £000s
Replacement laptops/tablets	-	348	357	404	414	425	435
Additional devices	227	-	-	245	-	-	264
Desktop set-up (Monitors, docks)	577	-	-	-	-	653	-
Thin Client terminals	-	764	-	-	-	-	865
ISP/WAN - no longer required	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fat Client – no longer required	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revised Total	**804**	**1,112**	**357**	**649**	**414**	**1,077**	**1,564**
Funding Changes (In Year)	**254**	**- 438**	**57**	**349**	**56**	**708**	**- 769**
Rolling Total	**254**	**- 183**	**- 127**	**222**	**278**	**986**	**218**
Volume driven change in current user base	-	48	57	104	56	56	55
Project Driven change	254	- 486	-	245	-	653	- 824

Local Digital Declaration (LDD)

26. 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.

27. 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."*

28. A key issue, following LDD principles, will be to ensure that the needs of service users are fully met. We anticipate that the provision of tablets / laptops to facilitate flexible working will be well received by staff as a key enabler to a different way of working.

Alternative options considered and consultation

29. The report proposes an alternative way to equip staff to work flexibly from any location, including from home. The proposal reflects the experience of the Covid-19 lockdown, and the need to ensure that staff have the right equipment to access Brigade IT systems.

30. An alternative proposal would be to continue to ask staff to use personal equipment or to reimburse staff for equipment costs at home. It is clear, from the number of laptop and tablet devices issued during the start of the lockdown, that many staff share home equipment and found it difficult to work when another member of their household needs to use a device. In addition, the ICT Service Desk have had to deal with a larger number of support calls from staff who experience problems accessing Brigade systems from home devices. Such calls can be difficult (or impossible) to resolve given the varying nature and age of home equipment, and different operating systems. The proposal in this report would provide a common standard of equipment and operating system (Windows 10) which will make central ICT support much simpler. The equipment will also provide staff with a consistent way of accessing Brigade systems, and variations in experience will be much less likely.

31. No external consultation is necessary on the proposal in this report.

Collaboration opportunities

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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. Some 61 per cent of the suppliers on this framework

are an SME. The UK public sector and their associated bodies and agencies, including the voluntary sector and charities, can use this framework.

36. 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.

37. 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.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

38. This project supports the strategic intent for transformation in the workplace and will allow our organisation to evolve to meet the challenges of the future. By providing equipment that truly enables flexible working we will be seizing the opportunity for a real transformation in how our people collaborate, be it side by side or separated by distance, in support of delivering Brigade objectives

39. The objective of this report is to provide equipment for staff to reflect the fact that, in the future, they will work partly in the office and partly at home (or another remote location). The current provision of 'thin client' terminals does not offer this flexibility so it is proposed to change this approach for staff based at Brigade Headquarters.

40. The Board is asked to agree the proposal in this report.

Impacts

Finance comments

41. This report recommends that capital expenditure of up to £900,000 is agreed for new equipment to allow better flexible working. Funding for this is included in the capital programme and this report sets out how this will be managed by diverting existing resources, for a net reduction in the programme overall of £158,000 over seven years. If the £900k cost is funded through borrowing this will result in capital financing costs of £207k annually for five years made up of £27k in interest payments and £180k in minimum revenue provision.

42. The report also notes that there would be an ongoing revenue costs of £159,375 plus inflationary increases in line with the contract requirements to support the extra equipment, this cost can be met by repurposing the existing desktop and server replacement budgets for the length of the contract. In addition, this proposal will require in-house support costs of £47k to establish an FRS D post, the cost of which will be found from undertaking a restructure within ICT.

Workforce comments

43. There has been no planned workforce consultation. Some initial discussions have taken place with the group representing staff with disabilities, given the perceived benefits for those staff as outlined in the 'equality impact' section in this report. Some 800 staff will be affected by this proposal and detailed communication will take place with these staff about the roll-out, if the proposal is agreed.

Legal comments

44. This report seeks approval of new expenditure relation to equipment and support to enable better flexible working arrangements for staff at Headquarters and elsewhere.

45. 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.

46. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (the "2004 Act") states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.

47. Under section 327D of the Greater London Authority 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.

48. 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"). In particular, paragraph 2.1. (b) requires prior approval from the Deputy Mayor where there is a commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices. The decision for new equipment far exceeds this value, therefore, this report to the Deputy Mayor fulfils the aforementioned requirement.

49. The Commissioner's Board must in advance the report being presented to the Deputy Mayor and the Commissioner taking a decision first note the contents of the report in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Commissioner's Board. The proposed recommendation for the London Fire Commissioner to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Technical and Commercial to deal with all contract awards in connection with the new equipment as set out in this report is permitted under Part 4 of the LFC's Scheme of Delegation.

50. Routine contract matters (including modifications permitted within the existing terms of the contract and within existing budgets) under £150k are delegated to the Assistant Director of Technical and Commercial Services.

51. The Procurement department must ensure any tender exercise for the new equipment and changes to existing contracts for additional support is properly conducted in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the internal procurement standing orders prior to the decision to award a contract or modification.

52. The specification for any new equipment should also ensure compliance with The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 in order to protect employees and workers from health risks associated with display screen equipment.

53. In relation to the additional FRS post referred to in the body of the report, all Heads of Service have delegated authority under the LFC's Scheme of Governance to determine matters relating to the internal structure of the department, and the delegated authority extends to the appointment and management of all staff below the Head of Service level.

54. Having new equipment and additional support will enable fire and rescue staff to be more efficient and effective in their day to day work.

Procurement and Sustainability

55. There is a need to establish a new procurement for screens, docking stations, headsets, and laptops/tablets, and this will be undertaken in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Technical and

Commercial. There may be purchasing frameworks – as outlined in the collaboration section above – that can be utilised, but that will be an option to be agreed.

56. Existing support contracts have been set-up so that the Brigade can vary its asset (equipment) base substantially, if required, over the life of the contract. Such contracts can be varied to (a) extend the support provided, (b) put in place appropriate software licences, and (c) increase the number of mobile data contracts required to support this initiative. The Assistant Director, Technical and Commercial, has confirmed that the consequential increased demand arising from the purchase of additional equipment can be met under the existing three contracts, that it is within the terms of those contracts, and within the relevant contract value.

57. 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.

Strategic Drivers

58. The driver for this proposal is experience of the unusual circumstances of the Covid-19 lockdown, when most staff based at Headquarters worked from home and many now continue to work from home. Consequently, this proposal is not in the Transformation Delivery Plan, as it has arisen since the Plan was approved.

59. The proposal would, however, sit under the strategic pillar *'Delivering Excellence'* and in particular would support the aims - *'constantly improving effectiveness of our service'* and *'improved execution'*, for the reasons outlined in this paper.

Equality

60. 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.

61. 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.

62. 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.

63. 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.

64. Having due regard to the need to <u>advance equality of opportunity</u> 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.

65. 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.

66. Having due regard to the need to <u>foster good relations</u> 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.

67. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken on 28/09/20. The impact assessment found outline positive impacts identified for those with disabilities, because of the provision of enhanced visual and audio capability (including the ability to dictate rather than type) via Windows 10, and Microsoft 365, was thought to be of particular benefit to this group. These facilities, particularly those available with Microsoft 365, may obviate the need for specialist software.

List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1.	Persona for a member of staff working flexibly	None

Appendix – Persona for flexible working

The People Services Manager

Erika works in the People Services team and is predominantly based at Brigade HQ at Union Street. However, as part of the newly introduced flexible working arrangements, Erika now only comes to the office for two days some weeks, three days on others. The rest of the time Erika works from home. To accommodate this new working pattern, Erika has been issued a new light-weight tablet, which she preferred over a traditional laptop. With her long commute to work, the tablet allows her to make the most use of the travel time, utilising both Wi-Fi and 4G connectivity. Erika feels supported by the Brigade with the right ICT set up that works at home. Moving from home to work environment is really easy with new docking stations for her tablet that work well in both sites, and elsewhere.

- As her tablet is relatively small, it does not lend itself to being used for long periods, either at home or in the office. To overcome this, Erika is able to connect her device to a **'docking station'** (both in the office and at home) that allows her to use a full-size keyboard and mouse, a larger screen and a headset for use with video and other calls.
- Although Erika is eligible for a Brigade Android mobile phone, she prefers to use her own iPhone, so she is able to take advantage of the Brigade's **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy**. The Brigade's **Mobile Device Management** (MDM) solution manages an area on her phone that she can use to access Microsoft 365, allowing her to send / receive mail and access MS Office applications including Microsoft Teams.
- Enjoys the flexibility of being able to work from home, allowing for an **improved work life balance** with caring responsibilities at home
- Using **Microsoft Teams** to stay in touch, with the chat function great for informal communication and video for meetings.
- It's really easy to work with email and draft documents using **Office 365**, without the need to log-on to an LFB remote access session.
- Access to LFB systems work well with all available online (via **remote access**) and quick access to personal and Brigade-wide files.
- The Brigade's data is kept safe using **Multi-Factor Authentication** (MFA) which sends

Erika a code via her mobile phone to help her logon securely.
- Her tablet as **'unified communications'** so – with her headset – she can use it to make and receive work calls, without having to use her personal mobile or home phone to chat with line manager, who keeps in regular contact ensuring wellbeing.
- Erika has access to **LFB Yammer** which connects staff and information across the Brigade. As part of Microsoft 365, she uses Yammer to engage with experts around the Brigade and share knowledge.
- Weekly meeting with her work colleagues using **Microsoft Teams** allow for catch up with others' work and chance to share what's happening at home.
- Regular themed sessions within the department happen as a **Microsoft Teams live event** using so that Erika can continue to learn about wider work of colleagues, her corporate Brigade news and keep up to date
- Brigade leadership provide video updates using **Stream** (part of Office 365), have launched a regular podcast which combines formal and informal approach to great acclaim

Regular reminders to check working environment at both sites with simple **display screen equipment (DSE) tests** available on brigade app.