

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD1499

**Title:** Extension of the Transcription Services for the GLA

### Executive Summary:

In 2013, the GLA entered into a contract with Wordwave International Limited t/a Merrill Corporation\* for the provision of transcription services, as approved through DD979. In order to achieve coordination across the GLA Group, the new contract was based on the same terms and conditions as the TfL Contract and was procured through TfL Procurement. To ensure that the timescales within the respective contracts with the transcription services provider were aligned, the GLA contract was for one year, with the option to extend for a further 12 months in 2014 and to extend again for a further 12 months in 2015, after which the GLA Group could conduct a single procurement exercise for these services. In February 2014 the option to extend the contract for a further 12 months was exercised. The contract was extended by a further 12 months in February 2015, pending a single procurement exercise in 2015/16. Approval is now sought to extend the contract by a further three months, prior to the commencement in July 2016 of the contract procured by TfL Procurement.

\*in June 2015 Wordwave International Limited was acquired by DTI Global

### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Secretariat approves:

- The extension of the GLA's current transcription services contract with Wordwave International Limited t/a DTI Global for a period of three months, starting on 1 April 2016 at an estimated cost of £10,000

### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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:** Mark Roberts

**Position:** Executive Director of Secretariat

**Signature:**



**Date:**

15/4/16

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 The provision of (edited) verbatim transcripts of London Assembly and/or Assembly committee meetings is a key service, allowing the London Assembly Members, GLA staff, external stakeholders, the public and press to have a full accurate record of proceedings at Assembly meetings. Transcripts form the public statutory record of Mayor's Question Time meetings and are a vital part of the evidence base for each scrutiny review project undertaken by the London Assembly.
- 1.2 In 2011, Transport for London procured a contract with Wordwave International Limited t/a Merrill Corporation ("Merrill") for the provision of transcription services, which is available to the other functional bodies.
- 1.3 Following a review, it was recommended that the GLA (for London Assembly services in particular) entered into a new contract with Merrill on the same terms and conditions as the TfL contract for the provision of transcription services. Accordingly, in January 2013, the GLA entered into a contract with Merrill for the provision of transcription services, as approved through DD979 (attached as Appendix 1). The contract included the option of an extension for a further 12 months in 2014 and a further extension for an additional 12 months in 2015.
- 1.4 The option to extend the contract for 12 months was exercised in 2014, as approved through ADD146 (attached as Appendix 2) and, following discussions with TfL, the option of a further 12 month extension was exercised, with effect from 1 April 2015.
- 1.5 In June 2015 Wordwave International Limited was acquired by DTI Global, the contract and services provided being unaffected.
- 1.6 A single procurement exercise for a transcription provider for the GLA Group is currently being conducted by TfL procurement, with the new contract expected to be in place from 1 July 2016, and will be authorised under DD1380 (attached as Appendix 4).
- 1.7 There are no service / performance issues with the current provider.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1 The objective of extending this contract for a further three months is to maintain the provision of transcription services until the single contract is in place, which had been expected by 1 April 2016, but which is now expected by 1 July 2016.

#### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1 This proposed contract extension would not have any foreseen impacts on any groups with protected characteristics.

#### **4. Other considerations**

##### **a) Key risks and issues**

The Head of Committee and Member Services is the lead officer for the GLA in terms of ensuring efficient and effective services for the Authority under the terms of the proposed extension of contract and managing any associated risks. The short further extension is necessary and justified without going through a further procurement process in order to ensure that there is no break in service provision and because of the significant inconvenience, and disproportionate cost that would be caused by procuring a new supplier before the new contract takes effect, which is expected to be on 1 July 2016. The costs of this short further extension are small and are not expected to exceed £10,000 which is less than 50% of the original contract value.

##### **b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities**

The provision of transcripts ensures that the full records of relevant meetings of the London Assembly and its committees are able to be placed in the public domain via the Authority's website and through being included in published agenda for meetings. This process assists the Authority in terms of meeting its commitments to transparency and accessibility with regard to the transaction of its business.

##### **c) Impact assessments and consultations**

The proposed extension is for a three month period, until the current procurement exercise has concluded and a new contract is in place. Therefore, no impact assessment or consultation is deemed necessary.

#### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1 The extension of the GLA's current transcription services contract with Merrill Legal Services for a period of three months, from 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016, will be funded from within the existing Committee Services budget for 2016/17.
- 5.2 As the contract is flexible (demand-led contractual arrangements), the cost of the service provision depends on the actual usage by the London Assembly's Secretariat Directorate. The costs for 2013/14 and 2014/15 were £37,000 and £24,000 respectively. The estimated cost for the extension is up to £10,000 for the three month period.

#### **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 Under Section 56 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the "Act") the Assembly is under a duty to keep proper minutes of its meetings, which includes the answers given to questions asked at Mayor Question Time meetings.
- 6.2 Under s34 of the Act the GLA has the power, acting by the Mayor, to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any functions of the GLA exercisable by the Mayor. In this case, the preparation of transcripts of its meetings, especially oral responses, is facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the GLA fulfilling its various duties.

6.3 DD979 approved the 2013 original 15 month contract between the GLA and Wordwave International Limited t/a Merrill Corporation. This contract provided for two options to extend of 12 months each and the GLA exercised the second of these options. Officers should ensure that the contract extension is on the same terms and conditions as the existing contract.

**7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

N/A

**Appendices and supporting papers:**

Appendix 1 – DD979  
Appendix 2 – ADD146  
Appendix 3 – ADD245  
Appendix 4 – DD1380

**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**

If YES, for what reason:

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

**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 to  
confirm the  
following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Rebecca Arnold has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Ed Williams has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

**Financial and Legal advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

**Signature**

*M. J. Allen*

**Date**

*14.4.16*

