

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE & RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD15

**Title: Desktop Improvement Project**

### **Executive Summary:**

Report LFC-0064 to the London Fire Commissioner sought approval for the expenditure to deliver a Desktop Improvement Project (the “Project”). The key objectives of the Project are to upgrade the Windows 2016 operating system, including the web browser, and allow for the upgrade of Microsoft Office software on the Brigade’s main digital platform—the Citrix terminal services desktop.

Budgetary provision has been made in the Commissioner’s capital plan for a project cost of £250,000 for external staff and supplier resources from existing contracts.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the London Fire Commissioner to seek prior consent before ‘[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above’.

### **Decision:**

The Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience approves the expenditure of up to £250,000 for the London Fire Commissioner’s Desktop Improvement Project.

### **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:**

25/2/19

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

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

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

- 1.1. The London Fire Brigade currently uses a Citrix / zero client ('terminal services') infrastructure to provide the majority of desktop services to just under 6,000 end users. The Citrix environment supports the common desktop that all Brigade staff use on a daily basis and includes regularly used applications such as the Microsoft Office suite of products.
- 1.2. The Citrix environment currently operates on top of a Microsoft Server 2008 operating system. Microsoft has given notice that support for this operating system is to be withdrawn in 18 months' time. Additionally, support for the Internet Explorer 11 browser, currently used by the Brigade, is also to be withdrawn. The withdrawal of support for the current operating environment will result in no further updates or security enhancements being released for these products. This would result in the Brigade being exposed to an unacceptable level of risk from both malware and software failure. Should a failure occur, all Brigade users would be affected as this would result in users not being able to access data and would cause wide spread disruption.
- 1.3. Additionally, the Brigade uses third party software applications that will only be supported by the respective suppliers if the Brigade is operating on currently supported Windows operating systems and tools.
- 1.4. These changes by Microsoft drive the Brigade's need to upgrade the Windows Server operating system and the web browser, with the logical follow-up to update the Microsoft Office suite at the same time, from a parallel project.

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

- 2.1. This decision and the appended Report LFC-0064 seeks approval for expenditure of up to £250,000 to deliver a Desktop Improvement Project.
- 2.2. It is proposed to upgrade the current Citrix environment from the Windows Server 2008 version to the latest supported version of Windows Server 2016 operating system. This will provide a Windows 10 'look and feel' for the desktop, which many Brigade users will be familiar with from use on personal home devices. In addition, elements of the desktop environment will also be upgraded, including the web browser to the latest Microsoft offering.
- 2.3. The complementary 'Modern Workplace' project will deliver an upgraded version of the Office product suite to all users, as outlined in the separate report to the LFC Board (LFC-0057) which was agreed on 15 August 2018. Delivery of this Modern Workplace project, which also includes the introduction of SharePoint online and Exchange online, will be coordinated with the Desktop Improvement Project to deliver the Office 365 online product suite for infrequent users (e.g. fire stations users up and including to Watch Manager), and the online / Office 365 product suite to frequent users (mainly Station Manager and above, and office-based staff). The upgrade of the server environment will need to be completed to support the introduction of the latest desktop version of the Office suite.
- 2.4. All line of business applications that have a front end that is provided via Citrix will be transferred to the latest operating environment. There will need to be a comprehensive testing regime introduced and almost certainly a degree of change for some applications to enable them to operate in the new environment.

- 2.5. This Decision ensures that the London Fire Brigade is able to fund a project to perform this upgrade and improvement to its digital environment, ensuring it can maintain a high-quality, secure and resilient platform beyond the point of withdrawal of Microsoft support for the Windows Server 2008 operating system.
- 2.6. The project is limited to upgrading the Citrix 'terminal services' operating system, end-user desktop environment and ensuring that all relevant line of business applications run in the new environment. To achieve this, the Commissioner will need to utilise existing Brigade contracts to contract someone with technical 'terminal services' skills for approximately 300 days to support delivery of the project. The updating of server software may require adjustments to the Brigade's 'line of business' software systems (probably between 10-15 systems, subject to testing) to ensure compatibility with the latest server software, and such changes will be delivered via the contracts already in place with those suppliers providing support for those systems impacted.
- 2.7. No specific new procurement will be required to support this expenditure to progress this project. Temporary specialist staff to be engaged to support this project will be recruited using the Brigade's existing (and properly tendered) contract for temporary staff. The work to adjust any of the Brigade's systems, in the light of the new desktop software/operating system, will be undertaken (where it is necessary) by those different contractors that support the Brigade's many different systems. These support contracts enable enhancements and adjustments to the various systems as necessary. All those contracts have been tendered and let in accordance with the Brigade's standing orders and in line with procurement law, although many of them will have been let before the governance changes in April 2018.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the London Fire Commissioner must have 'due regard' of the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
  - Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty – and the potential impacts of this decision on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation) – has been considered by the London Fire Commissioner and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience. The Brigade has completed an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) in respect of the desktop improvement project. As the report states, the project will effectively provide a Windows 10 'look and feel' to the desktop, by upgrading underlying software from Windows Server 2008 to Server 2016. For many users, the desktop will be similar to the familiar Windows 10 desktop they use at home.
- 3.3. The EIA looks at any specific impacts on those groups with 'protected characteristics' (i.e. age, sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity), and identifies those with disabilities as potentially those likely to potentially experience impacts.
- 3.4. Windows 10 includes a range of accessibility features that can be deployed either by users themselves, or centrally for all users, to meet the specific needs, including those users with disabilities. In addition, the Brigade already meets the specific needs of users with disabilities by providing software such as *Read&Write Gold* (text to speech), *Inspiration* (visual learning) and *Dragon* (speech to text) which are made available on laptop/tablet devices and PCs. Work is well advanced on making 'Read&Write Gold' and Dragon software available for the existing 'thin client' (terminal services) desktop obviating

the need to issue laptops/tablets/PCs for users who require these tools. These tools will also be made available as part of the upgraded desktop.

- 3.5. The Brigade will continue to monitor any equality concerns that may arise during the planning and subsequent deployment of the new desktop software. The Brigade will use its existing policies and procedures to assist members of staff who require adjustments as a result of the deployment.
- 3.6. Updating and upgrading the digital infrastructure of the Brigade will provide new opportunities to leverage enhanced accessibility features and facilities for staff from Microsoft's Improved Ease of Access settings for vision, hearing and other accessibility categories.
- 3.7. The inclusive design principles used by Microsoft in the development of the Windows 10 operating system can be reviewed here: <https://www.microsoft.com/design/inclusive/>.

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

- 4.1. This Decision supports the London Safety Plan's '*Digital First Priorities*' under its '*Valuing staff and using resources wisely*' objectives, including to digitally transform the Brigade to "*[help] London Fire Brigade deliver its services in new and innovative ways, reflecting the needs of the service users, and helping make what the Brigade delivers more agile and flexible*".
- 4.2. The London Fire Commissioner's corporate risk register includes CRR22: "*Brigade ICT services are affected by a cyber-attack*", rated as an A3 'red' risk. The delivery of modern digital infrastructure that will remain to receive regular software updates – after Microsoft withdraw support for the existing infrastructure in 18 months – is a key facilitator to the effective management of this risk, and the protection against developing and emerging cyber-threats.

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

- 5.1. The expenditure is to be funded through sums available to the Commissioner that are in the approved Capital Plan. There are no direct financial implications for the GLA.

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

- 6.1. 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. Under section 327D of the GLA 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.
- 6.2. 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").
- 6.3. Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner 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...".
- 6.4. The Commissioner proposes to spend up to £250,000 delivering a project to upgrade its digital environment, necessitating the approval of the Deputy Mayor. There are staff resources and existing contractual arrangements in place to deliver the changes, and no new tendering exercises are required.

- 6.5. Officers have indicated in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of this report that the Brigade's existing contracts for staff resources and software support, which are proposed to be used to support the Desktop Improvement Project, were procured in accordance with relevant procurement law and the Brigade's Standing Orders.

**Appendices and supporting papers:**

LFC-0064 – Desktop improvement project: approval of expenditure

**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**

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

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service**

Tom Middleton 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**

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 18 February 2019.

**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

*18.2.19*