

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2521

Title: Funding and extension of the contract for the IT hosting, IT support and development of the Mayor's mobility schemes.

Executive Summary:

This paper seeks approval to fund and extend the contract for the IT hosting, support and development of the Mayor's mobility schemes for one year from 1 April 2021. Current contractual arrangements and funding approval come to an end on 31 March 2021 (approved via MD2209), although there is an option to extend the current contract by up to two years in the form of two one-year extensions. This will enable the continuation of these two schemes.

The schemes are strategically important for the delivery of London Housing Strategy priorities, they are extremely popular and successful, and the GLA is in contract with each of the London boroughs to administer Seaside & Country Homes.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves:

1. expenditure of up to £44,000 for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, comprising up to £34,000 for IT hosting and support and up to £10,000 for development services – for the Mayor's housing mobility schemes. This will come from external mobility scheme income; and
2. the exercise of an existing contractual option for the first of two 12-month extensions available under the Authority's contract with Probrand Ltd for continued IT hosting, support and development for the schemes.

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: Rickardo Hyatt

Position: Executive Director, Housing & Land

Signature:



Date:

8 February 2021

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Housing Moves is the Mayor's scheme to enable existing housing association and council tenants in London to move from one borough to another (approved through MD522). Boroughs and housing associations contribute a proportion of their social housing lettings to a central 'pot', and their tenants and residents can then apply for the scheme and place a bid to move to one of the pooled properties.
- 1.2 Since its launch in May 2012, over 30,000 households have applied for the scheme and there have been 1,511 moves (of which 172 were in 2019/20 and 61 in 2020/21 so far). The total for 20/21 is lower as the scheme was suspended during quarter one in accordance with Government and Public Health England advice regarding Covid19. Since September 2019, Housing Moves has provided a priority pathway for survivors of domestic abuse, in partnership with the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal managed by Safer London. A similar priority pathway was established in May 2019 for former rough sleepers in Clearing House accommodation who are ready to move on to an independent, permanent home. This releases much-needed accommodation with support for rough sleepers ready to move on from hostels.
- 1.3 Seaside & Country Homes (SCH) enables older social tenants to move out of the capital, freeing up homes which can then be used by social landlords to house Londoners in need. In 2019/20, there were 169 moves, freeing up 392 bedrooms and 119 moves in 2020/21 so far. The scheme creates significant financial savings for London boroughs, and it provides a positive housing option to older Londoners. It was established by the Greater London Council in 1968 and was devolved from the then Department of Communities and Local Government to the GLA in 2011 (approved through MD558). Since 1 April 2013, SCH has been funded by the London boroughs on a fee-per-letting basis (approved through MD1070), and the GLA is in contract with every borough to deliver the scheme
- 1.4 Both schemes are underpinned by an IT system, the functionality of which includes the following:
 - online customer applications (both schemes);
 - property advertisements and bidding (Housing Moves only);
 - equalisation of properties contributed and moves in (Housing Moves only);
 - the matching of applicants to properties (SCH only);
 - reporting and monitoring tools (both schemes); and
 - arrangements for the top slice of new build affordable rented homes.

IT system

- 1.5 The IT system for the schemes was developed by Home Connections and is a much-enhanced version of their off-the-shelf choice-based lettings system. The Authority contract with Probrand Ltd in relation to Home Connections is dated 18 December 2018 (the "Contract"). It was called off from TfL's reseller and associated services framework dated 30th July 2014. Under the Contract, Probrand Ltd provides hosting and support (at a fixed annual cost) and IT development work (as and when required, and as specified by the GLA, for the service until March 2021 (approved through MD 2209, DD1302, DD1488 and DD2096). The commission was let via a call off contract. The initial contract term ends on 31 March 2021. However, the contract contains an option for up to two extensions of one year each exercisable by the fact that there is no material change to the services for which system is required. It still covers just the two mobility schemes and the overall nature of the contract is not affected.
- 1.6 This DD seeks approval to fund a further year of IT hosting, support and development, and to exercise one of the two one-year contract extensions. The cost will be a maximum of £44,000, of

which fixed costs for hosting and support will be £34,000. On the basis of the requirements since 2012, it is highly likely that some IT development is required each year, for new functionality to reflect changes in policy, practice and legislation. Approval is therefore also sought for funding of up to £10,000 for IT development. Expenditure on development will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

	Total
IT hosting and support (fixed costs)	£34,000
IT development	£10,000
Total	£44,000

- 1.7 Costs will be funded by external income from the London boroughs.
- 1.8 A contract extension rather than re-procurement is being proposed. This is because a re-procurement could potentially result in a new contractor being selected and a new system needing to be built. It would not be advisable at this stage in the Mayoral cycle to devote significant resource to the development of a new system. The ultimate intention, however, is to procure a new contract to be in place by 1 April 2023 at the latest, subject to further approval being secured. A decision to extend the existing contract needs to be made at this point to assure contractors of the continuation well ahead of the end of the contract on 31 March 2021 so that they can continue to resource it.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The key objective of extending the IT contract is to enable the schemes to continue to operate, in order to deliver the policies and outcomes set out below and in section 4b.
- 2.2 Based on current performance, expected outcomes for 2021/22 are as follows:

	Housing Moves	Seaside & Country Homes	Total
Moves	180	180	360
Bedrooms freed up	n/a	450	450

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being "relevant" protected characteristics).
- 3.2 As those with the protected characteristics of age, race and disability are over-represented among existing social tenants, the proposals in this paper are likely to have positive impacts on these groups.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
Following the election in May, there could be changes	Green	The extension is limited to just one year.

in Mayoral priorities so that the schemes are discontinued or substantially changed.		
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Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1 The Mayor's [London Housing Strategy](#), published in May 2018, contains the following policies relevant to the mobility schemes:

Given the overwhelming need for more affordable homes, London's existing affordable homes should be protected and utilised as efficiently as possible (policy 4.3).

To support this policy, the Mayor has taken, or will take, the following actions in the coming years:

- *operate the Housing Moves and Seaside and Country Homes schemes to support social tenants to move where they wish or need to do so;*
- *increase the number of affordable homes available for pan-London moves by requiring a proportion of new affordable homes developed through the Mayor's Affordable Homes Programme to be available to social tenants through the Housing Moves scheme; and*
- *prioritise the rehousing of social tenants who are victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence through the Housing Moves scheme.*

- 4.2 The London Housing Strategy also details the Mayor's commitment to reducing rough sleeping and homelessness.

- 4.3 The Strategy also contains policies that support the priority pathways for former rough sleepers and victims of domestic abuse, the relevant extract is as follows:

He (the Mayor) will also work with councils to try and prevent homelessness and help homeless Londoners into sustainable accommodation. This includes investing in places for homeless Londoners to live, and supporting joint efforts between councils to accommodate homeless Londoners. He will also focus on homelessness that is caused by violence against women and girls.

- 4.4 The Mayor's [Rough Sleeping Plan of Action](#) seeks to maximise options for those moving on from Clearing House properties where they no longer require support. Historically small numbers have moved into social housing given the limited supply of property and ability to register on local lists. Working with Clearing House and the G15 group of landlords, the Housing Moves scheme provides a dedicated pathway for them to register and bid for properties.

- 4.5 The Mayor's Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme approved under MD2687 also includes a commitment to improve opportunities to move on to long term accommodation which the Clearing House priority pathway also supports.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.6 There are no known conflicts of interest for those involved in the drafting or clearance of this report.

Impact assessments and consultation

- 4.7 The Department for Communities and Local Government, which previously operated the scheme, undertook an equalities impact assessment of Seaside & Country Homes in 2009. An independent evaluation of the first two years of Housing Moves, which included consideration of the equalities impacts of the scheme, was undertaken in 2015.

- 4.8 The London Housing Mobility Group (LHMG) which is comprised of borough representatives and housing associations provides oversight of the Mayor's mobility schemes. Its purpose is to:

- deliver the Mayor's aim of enhancing mobility and choice in London's social rented sector;
- identify and share good practice in housing mobility;

- retain oversight of projects and services put in place to meet this aim including any proposed expansions or alterations of these projects and services; and
- identify gaps in provision and resources and seek to resolve these.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This decision requests approval for revenue expenditure of up to £44,000 for the next 12 months as detailed in paragraph 1.6: £34,000 for an extension of the current IT hosting and support contract for one year for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and up to £10,000 for development over the same period (Current contract approved by MD2209 for £195,000 ends on 31 March 2021).
- 5.2 The above expenditure will be funded from external mobility scheme income.
- 5.3 Funding in future years will be subject to the annual budget setting process.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions fall within the statutory powers of the Authority to promote and/or to do anything which is facilitative of or conducive or incidental to social development within Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- (a) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - (b) consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - (c) consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 As set out in paragraph 1.5 above, the Authority procured the contract with Probrand Ltd via a call off from TfL's reseller and associated services framework. Regulation 72(1)(a) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 provides that a contract may be modified during its term if the modification, irrespective of its monetary value, has been provided for in the initial procurement documents in clear precise and unequivocal review clauses provided that such clauses (i) state the scope and nature of the modifications or options as well as the conditions under which they may be used; and (ii) do not alter the overall nature of the contract. The officers have set out at paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6 how the exercise of the option for a further 12 months complies with these requirements.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Extension of existing contract commences	1 April 2021
Extension terminates	31 March 2022

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) 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 it has been approved 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 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included 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:

Colin Gipp has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Debra Levison 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.

✓

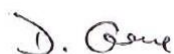
Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 8 February 2021.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

8 February 2021