

REQUEST FOR DEPUTY MAYOR FOR FIRE AND RESILIENCE DECISION – DMFD173

Title: Thermal Imaging Camera Replacement

Executive summary:

This report seeks the approval of the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience for the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) to commit capital expenditure for the replacement of thermal imaging cameras (TICs), as set out in part 2 of the report.

TICs are an integral and critical item of equipment for London Fire Brigade (LFB). They assist LFB in providing essential frontline cover to the people of London. LFB currently has 199 TICs, which were introduced to LFB in 2016 for an agreed lifespan of five years. The current TICs have passed their end-of-life point and are unable to be maintained for any longer; therefore, they require replacement. LFB proposes to purchase 199 TICs, which will be located on all frontline appliances and on the fireboat; and for use within training.

The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018 sets out a requirement for the LFC 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...”.

Decision:

That the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience authorises the LFC to commit capital expenditure of up to the amount set out in the part 2 of the report for the purposes of purchasing the required replacement TICs and for comprehensive TIC training.

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:

16/9/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Report LFC-0725y to the London Fire Commissioner (LFC) explains that Babcock Critical Services Limited (BCS) is London Fire Brigade's (LFB) maintenance and service provider, and manages the vehicles and equipment contract on behalf of LFB. This contract was awarded in 2014 and runs until 2035. As part of this contract, BCS replaces, services and repairs all items listed within the Vehicle and Equipment contract within a lifing profile of each asset.
- 1.2 The LFB thermal imaging cameras' (TICs') asset life is five years, and they were due for replacement in 2021. However, as a result of the impact of the accelerated Ultra-Low Emission Zone asset replacement programme, the impacts of COVID on suppliers, and competing priority projects such as firefighting branches and smoke blockers, a decision was taken to extend the life of the TICs as per the terms of the contract with BCS. A further extension to the life of this asset is no longer an option as the manufacturer no longer supplies this particular model, and is unable to support the asset due to lack of available parts. They are therefore beyond economic repair.
- 1.3 The TICs are required as part of LFB's essential frontline cover; and support their users in the search and rescue for persons, identifying fire spread and aiding safe movement. As well as these benefits, the footage from a TIC recording at an incident can be used later by the Fire Investigation team to determine where the heat source started; and by the Fire Safety team to assist with enforcement actions.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.2 The first objective of this proposal is to ensure the provision of TICs meet the required standard. The current cameras are at the end of their serviceable and contracted life; they are therefore due for replacement. Due to the demands placed upon LFB, the replacement TICs must be capable of safe and consistent performance throughout their operational life.
- 2.3 The second objective is to improve the equipment for LFB firefighters. Five different models of camera have been identified for extensive testing under a range of conditions to ensure the safety of the crews and the public, which is paramount. These are the main considerations of the design, build and operation of the TIC. The expected outcome of this proposal will be for all 199 cameras to be replaced with the latest technology, and an accompanied specific training programme, by the financial year 2023-24.
- 2.4 The third objective is to mitigate the risk of theft of the TICs. Over the lifespan of this asset, LFB has suffered approximately £153,000 worth of losses due to theft of TICs. Whilst mitigations have been put in place at station level, such as the provision of a secure locker on fire appliances, suppliers have been invited as part of the tender process to recommend additional security measures to prevent theft of this high-value item.
- 2.5 To maximise the understanding and capabilities of the new TIC, a comprehensive computer-based training (CBT) package will be required. This CBT package will be rolled out to all operational staff through a mandatory training session, and absorbed into the Development and Maintenance of Operational Professionalism training cycle to ensure currency and familiarisation. This is included in the project budget figures.

Collaboration

- 2.6 LFB and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are working together to share, and thus reduce, the costs involved in practical evaluation. The collaborative approach also allows for essential staff to share thoughts and experiences on potential TIC options between the two brigades, and discuss common difficulties and solutions. It should be seen as an opportunity to learn from each other and develop ideas.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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, and sexual orientation.
- 3.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.5 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity 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:
- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic
 - 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
 - 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.
- 3.6 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.

- 3.7 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations 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:
- tackle prejudice
 - promote understanding.
- 3.8 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. It is anticipated that the review and replacement of the TIC will have an overall positive impact on operational staff groups, from trainee firefighter through to station officer, and there are no anticipated adverse impacts.
- 3.9 In addition, the BCS contract requires BCS, and any sub-contractor it may engage, to conform to equality legislation and LFB equalities protocol. BCS also assesses all of its providers' approaches to equality, and ensures it is satisfied that they meet appropriate protocols, prior to their being listed as approved providers. Therefore, it is considered that there is an appropriate approach to equalities through the supply chain in respect of this procurement.

4. Other considerations

Workforce comments

- 4.1 Representative bodies have been involved throughout this project. Trade unions have been invited to all parts of the evaluations and end users have been approached for their feedback on all of the options available.

Sustainability comments

- 4.2 The existing TICs will either be resold or recycled by BCS under the provisions of the 2014 vehicle and equipment contract. The disposal process will fulfil LFB obligations under the Environmental Duty of Care Regulations; if the equipment is to be scrapped, or broken up for parts, the vehicle and equipment contractor will provide full details relating to the disposal of the component parts, and will ensure that LFB's obligations are documented and adhered to.
- 4.3 The 2014 vehicles and equipment contract with BCS provides for the capital replacement of fleet and equipment throughout the contract period of 21 years. Under the contract, BCS procures the new vehicles and equipment; and replaces the existing assets at their life expiry. BCS has policies in place relating to anti-slavery, sustainability and anti-corruption; this is done in accordance with the specifications and approvals issued by LFB.
- 4.4 A technical Sustainability Development Impact Assessment will be completed once the new item of equipment has been chosen.

Procurement comments

- 4.5 BCS is responsible for the procurement of vehicles and equipment as set out in the Vehicles and Equipment contract. The draft procurement strategy for the TIC assets was shared and approved by LFB's Procurement and Commercial team. Specific comments covering the source of the components, and the ongoing availability of spare parts to support repairs to the TICs, were included, together with comments confirming the overall evaluation of price and technical aspects of the final submissions. Initially BCS issued a request for quotation based on LFB's requirements. Four suppliers were identified as being able to offer a product that met these requirements. To

ensure the optimal product was selected a request for proposal, including a detailed requirement specification, was issued to these suppliers. Desktop evaluations have taken place, which will be followed by practical evaluations. It has been agreed with Procurement and Commercial that the initial desktop scores will be reviewed following the trials to ensure the final score reflects both aspects. The successful supplier will be the one with highest overall score combining technical factors, quality and price using whole-life cost, as stated in the evaluation criteria.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.6 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This report is requesting the approval to commit capital expenditure up to the amount set out in part two of this report for the purchase of replacement TICs.
- 5.2 The capital programme has an approved budget in 2022-23 for the purchase of TICs.
- 5.3 The capital budget is funded through capital receipts and borrowing. The cost of borrowing is made up of minimum revenue provision; it is based on the asset life per year, and interest on borrowing assuming a rate of 2.5 per cent per year. The cost of borrowing to fund the capital programme is reflected in the revenue budget.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the LFC 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 LFC 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 LFC 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 that direction requires the LFC 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...". The decision to purchase new TICs will therefore require approval from the Deputy Mayor.
- 6.4 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004). Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 2004 the LFC has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting and section 5A allows the LFC to procure personnel, services and equipment they consider appropriate for purposes incidental or indirectly incidental to their functional purposes.
- 6.5 The report confirms the provision of the TICs will be secured via an existing contract with BCS, which was tendered compliantly in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

6.6 These comments have been adopted from those provided by the LFC's General Counsel Department in report LFC-0725y to the LFC.

Appendices and supporting papers:

- Part 2 of the decision
- Appendix 1 – Part 1 of report LFC-0725y – Thermal Imaging Camera Replacement

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

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 – YES

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer

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

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service

Niran Mothada 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

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 12 September 2022

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

16/9/22