

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD162

Capital Works – Purchase equipment to support the City Hall Broadcasting Service

The Greater London Authority has a statutory duty under section 58 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to be transparent; this is assisted by having the facility to record, transcript and broadcast certain public meetings and committees involving the Mayor and London Assembly.

The broadcasting equipment was installed as part of the commissioning of City Hall in 2002 and has been in weekly use since then. To ensure that this statutory capability is maintained and because of the complex nature of the equipment the principle of progressive updating and replacement of equipment and components has been adopted.

As a result of its age and usage over the last 11 years some essential items of equipment that make up the City Hall broadcasting system are becoming less reliable and prone to failure. In addition, advances in media and communications technology mean the key clients served by the broadcasting service, namely the Mayor and London Assembly, are looking for improved functionality and compatibility with the new technology that they are using to conduct their official business.

To address both issues it is proposed to purchase of a Vision Mixer and ancillary equipment that will provide improved functionality and compatibility that supports the latest developments in media technology so ensuring that the broadcasting service remains fit for purpose. At the same time it will improve the resilience of the broadcasting system in the event of the failure of one of the original critical components, the Matrix, which is at the heart of the broadcast system. The Vision Mixer will effectively have the capability of acting as a mini-Matrix and allow the business of the Authority to continue until a repair or replacement of the Matrix is completed.

Decision:

The Head of Facilities Management is asked to approve the capital purchase, installation and commissioning of one Vision Mixer and ancillary equipment and system modifications for the sum of up to £46,000.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

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: Simon Grinter

Position: Head of Facilities Management

Signature:

Date:

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The Greater London Authority has a duty under section 58 of the GLA Act 1999 to be transparent by having the facility to record, transcript, broadcast and webcast certain public meetings and committees involving the Mayor and London Assembly.

1.2 The equipment that provides the broadcast service consists of multiple systems and components, ranging from cameras, mixing units, communications, control and editing systems and is technically complex, with some items of equipment being subject to greater use than others.

1.3 The original equipment was installed as part of the commissioning of City Hall in 2002 and has been in weekly use since then. To ensure that this statutory capability is maintained and because of the complex nature of the equipment the principle of progressive updating and replacement is adopted.

1.4 As a result of its age and usage over the last 11 years some essential items of equipment that make up the City Hall broadcasting system are becoming less reliable and prone to operational failure. In addition, advances in media and communications technology mean that key clients served by the broadcasting service, namely the Mayor and London Assembly, are looking for improved functionality and compatibility with the new technology that they are using to conduct their official business.

1.5 To ensure that the system remains fit for purpose and to provide improved resilience on the aging system, it is proposed to purchase of a Vision Mixer and associated ancillary equipment and works including two multi-screen monitors and modifications to the broadcast control room to allow the equipment to be integrated into the control console.

1.6 This investment will provide improved functionality that is compatible with the latest developments in media technology and more importantly the technology that is used by clients such as the Mayor, London Assembly or others. The introduction of a Vision Mixer will also make the broadcast system more resilient as it is capable of taking on some of the functionality of a critical piece of equipment called the Matrix which is at the heart of the broadcast system. The Matrix allows audio-visual signals from multiple sources and locations in the building to be compiled and transmitted to any source, for example to the internal City Hall TV or to public radio or television broadcasters. In the event of a breakdown of the Matrix, the Vision Mixer will be able to act as a mini-Matrix, which will enable broadcasting to continue, but in a reduced capacity, until the Matrix itself is either repaired or replaced.

1.7 The equipment will be procured through the incumbent Broadcast contractor, NEP Bowtie, in accordance with provisions which are included in their contract. The contract was competitively sourced through the OJEU process, in accordance with applicable EU procurement law and the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. The contract allows for the purchase and commissioning of such additional equipment and the cost contained in this Decision is based on prices submitted by NTP Bowtie Television. A check to ensure that the pricing offers value for money will be undertaken using a specialist broadcast consultant at a cost of £2,650.00 ahead of the purchase taking place, funded from existing revenue resources.

2. Other Considerations

Risk

2.1 The risk of not incorporating new technology into the broadcast system will mean that it will no longer be fit for purpose as information being used by clients using, new technologies, will not be capable of being broadcast and the GLA will not be able to fully fulfil its statutory duties. The equipment will effectively become unfit for its intended purpose.

2.2 Additionally, should the original Matrix which is at the core of the broadcast system breakdown, as a result of its age, broadcasting would totally cease without a Vision Mixer being available to take over some of the functionality of the Matrix and act as a back-up unit. Without the Vision Mixer there would inevitably be a gap in broadcast capability between the failure or breakdown of the Matrix and its repair or in the extreme case its replacement, which would be in the order of £100,000. This may cause disruption and re-scheduling to statutory meetings held by the GLA. The Purchase of a Vision Mixer, as well as ensuring the system remains fit for purpose, will also ensure business continuity and a degree of resilience to the broadcast service.

Impact Assessment & Consultation

2.3 It is not necessary to consult within the meaning of Section 32 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

2.4 The Mayor's Press Office and the London Assembly Press Office and the Secretariat have all been consulted over this investment to ensure that the broadcast service remains fit for purpose.

Links to Strategies & Priorities:

2.5 The Greater London Authority has a duty under section 58 of the GLA Act 1999 to be transparent by having the facility to record, transcript, broadcast and webcast certain public meetings and committees involving the Mayor and London Assembly.

3. Financial Comments

3.1 The capital costs to install the vision mixer up to a cost of £46,000 can be met from within the existing 2013-14 capital budget.

3.2 The additional revenue costs of £2,650 will need to be met from within the existing revenue budget in 2013/14.

3.3 Finance must be notified of the removal and disposal of any existing equipment so that this can be de-recognised from the fixed asset register as obsolete.

4. Legal Comments

4.1 Legal state that there is no need for Legal comments as the existing contract with NEP Bowtie makes provision for the supply of additional services, in this case equipment and the contract was procured on these terms and in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

Appendices and Supporting Papers: None

Public access to information

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the GLA website within 1 working day of approval.

Part 1 deferral: any fact or information whose release before a specific date would compromise the implementation of the decision may be included in Part 1, with Part 1 being deferred until after that date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Is the publication of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date:

Part 2 confidentiality: any fact and advice that should not be automatically made public should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the rationale for confidentiality.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Tick indicates approval (✓)

Drafting officer:

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

✓

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE:

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

Signature:

Date: