



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-24-073

Procurement of Physical Network Connections

| Report to: | Date: |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Finance and Investment Board..... | 27 June 2024 |
| Commissioner's Board | 9 July 2024 |
| Deputy Mayor's Fire Board | 23 July 2024 |
| London Fire Commissioner | |

Report by:
Chief Information Officer

Report classification:
For decision

For publication

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks authority for the LFC to procure replacement physical network connections, including wide area network (WAN) and metropolitan area network (MAN).

Wide and metropolitan area networks form the backbone of LFC digital communications and are essential to the continued operation of both front-line and back-office services.

Recommended decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director Procurement and Commercial to enter into contract(s) for the procurement of a replacement wide and metropolitan area network.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. All LFC sites communicate with each other over physical network links, currently provided by BT. This includes wide area network links to fire stations, (WAN) and metropolitan area networks (MAN), for sites with higher bandwidth requirements, such as Merton LOC and Stratford. In addition, there are a number of other links currently deployed to LFC sites, relating to telephony, internet and advanced digital subscriber line (ADSL)¹ services.
- 1.2. All digital services now run over these communications links, including the mission critical mobilising messages that are sent to stations from the vision mobilising system. In addition, these links provide access to the LFC's line of business applications, such as StARS, HR and Finance systems.
- 1.3. In July 2020 the LFC entered into a contract with BT for the provision of physical network services for a five-year period. This contract will expire on 30 June 2025, hence the need to implement a contract with either the existing or a new supplier, to ensure continuity of service.

¹ ADSL (**A**symmetric **D**igital **S**ubscriber **L**ine) is a technology that facilitates fast data transmission at a high bandwidth on existing copper wire telephone lines..

1.4. The LFC currently has three main types of site, with each site having a different bandwidth requirement (measured in megabits per second Mbps), due to the type of work carried out at that site.

These sites may be described as follows:

- Type A – 25 Megabits bandwidth (fire station)
- Type B – 50 Megabits bandwidth (fire station with office attached)
- Type C - 10 Gigabit bandwidth (Union Street, Merton LOC, Stratford)

1.5. The bandwidths referred to above have met LFC requirements for the past five years and there is no proposal to increase this bandwidth at this time. However, the proposed new service will allow the LFC to vary its bandwidth requirements at all sites, if demand changes over time. Using the current bandwidth as a baseline, network bandwidth monitoring will be undertaken during the life of the contract. A report on network bandwidth utilisation will be produced and reviewed each year and if particular stations are shown to be suffering from bandwidth issues, recommendations will be made to increase the bandwidth.

1.6. In addition, all sites will have the ability to "burst" to a higher bandwidth if business requirements at each site require it, so that service is not interrupted by any restriction imposed by any underlying contract.

2. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

2.1 The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to procure replacement physical network services contract, for a period of up to five years. This will consist of an initial three-year contract and the ability to extend the contract length by up to a further two-years, in one -year increments (three + one + one). A six month notice to terminate clause will be included that will allow the LFC to break the contract early where required.

2.2 The outcome of this procurement will be that continuity of network service will be maintained, therefore ensuring that front-line and back-office systems continue to function in support of all LFC activities.

3 Equality comments

3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service 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 not been carried out for this procurement. The procurement of a new WAN & MAN will be entirely transparent to LFC staff.

4. Other Considerations

Workforce comments

4.1 There are no plans for workforce consultation.

Sustainability comments

4.2 This report does not introduce any significant sustainability impacts. Where new policies and/or corporate projects arise, they are subject to the Brigade's sustainable development impact assessment (SDIA) process.

Procurement comments

- 4.3 Collaboration opportunities will be explored with the GLA Group but early indications are that the opportunities are limited or not available.

Routes to market will be explored, most likely utilising appropriate CCS network frameworks.

Communications comments

- 4.4 The report is not expected to have any direct communications implications.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The report seeks authority for the LFC to procure replacement physical network connections, including wide area network (WAN) and metropolitan area network (MAN). It is expected that costs will be contained within existing budgets within the ICT department and further comments on finance is incorporated in Part 2 of this report.
- 5.2 All LFC contractual inflationary increases are reviewed on an annual basis. The LFC budgets for inflation on an item-by-item basis, and the LFC will review those assumptions as part of its budget process for 2025/26. If inflation rates are above current assumptions a resulting budget increase will need to be submitted as part of LFC's annual submission to the Mayor's GLA Group budget process and/or the contract will need to be reviewed to assess whether it is possible to reduce the annual cost via a reduction in service. If inflationary increases result in in-year financial pressures, this will be reported on as part of regular financial reporting and met through the use of the Budget Flexibility Reserve.
- 5.3 LFC standard terms and conditions include clauses on indexation and termination that can be utilised if inflationary pressures affect the performance of the contract. If a contract is no longer viable then LFC will seek to terminate it on this basis or work with suppliers to pause delivery and/or renegotiate what is being delivered. This is preferable to inserting a break clause for inflation as such pressures apply across the market so it is unlikely that benefits will be gained from terminating a contract in order to go back out for competition.

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 Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (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 Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required for the London Fire Commissioner to procure replacement physical network connections, including wide area network (WAN) and metropolitan area network (MAN) and metropolitan area network at the values set out in part 2 of this report.
- 6.5 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by Section 7 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which states that fire and rescue authorities must make provision for the purpose of firefighting. In making this provision a fire and rescue authority must, amongst other things, secure the provision of the equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements.

List of Appendices

| Appendix | Title | Open or confidential |
|----------|-------|----------------------|
| 1. | None | |

Part two confidentiality

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – YES