Procurement of Safecommand™ Software

Report to: **Date:**

Investment & Finance Board……………………………23 January 31, 2025
Commissioner's Board …………………………………12 February 2025
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board…………………………… 25 February 2025
London Fire Commissioner ………………………………

Report by: Chief Information Officer

Report classification:

For decision

Not for publication

Values met

Service

I agree the recommended decision below.

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner   Date   **This decision was remotely signed on 3 April 2025**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

The report seeks authority to re-procure the Airbus SAFEcommand™ system, which includes modules for mobilising, guiding, messaging, crash recovery, risk information and chemical hazards. The SAFEcommand™ system is used to deliver and display mobilising information to crews on appliances, via Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). The Brigade has been using the SAFEcommand™ (formerly VMDS) system for several years and it was last re-procured in 2020. The system is comprised of the primary software, middleware and support of the system. The existing contract expires in August 2025.

Recommended Decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director procurement and commercial to re-procure the Airbus SAFEcommand™ up to the value contained in part 2 of this report for a period of up to three years.

1. Introduction & Background

1.1. As part of the national Firelink project (FEP348) the Brigade replaced the existing main scheme radios in appliances with new digital technology, based on Tetra and using "Airwave" as the service provider. In 2009, as part of the same project, Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) were installed on Brigade front-line appliances. At present the Brigade has around 176 MDTs in use, which are supported on a 24/7 basis. A project is underway to replace all these devices with upgraded hardware running the Windows 11 operating system and the latest Airbus Safecommand software.

1.2. The MDTs are used specifically to allow operationally relevant data to be accessed by crews on the way to and at incidents. The information provided on the MDT is largely map-based using A-Z maps to show large areas, but with the ability to zoom into specific streets and buildings (using OS MasterMap).

Vehicle Mounted Display System (VDMS) software from Airbus

1.3. To facilitate the MDTs on appliances being able to send / receive information via the Airwave secure bearer, a 'gateway' is required so that information could be sent / received from the Brigade mobilising system. To enable this functionality, the Brigade procured a (VMDS) from Airbus Ltd.

1.4. This application is widely used amongst fire and rescue services in the UK and beyond and after initial procurement the software was modified to provide the required level of integration between the Brigade's MDTs and the current mobilising system (Vision). The application has several modules as follows:

- **ScResponse** – is the software present on MDTs and on tablets deployed in the rear of appliances. It facilitates the receipt of mobilising messages and appliance status back to control. It also presents key software applications for crew use such as Crash, Chemdata and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

- **ScCapture** – is a system designed to receive the data packages that are required for MDTs, for example, data concerning oxygen cylinders and operational risk database (ORD) information.

- **ScCourier** – formats the packages that have been received by ScCapture and pushes these packages out to the MDTs. The ScCourier application includes a dashboard that allows administrators to determine which clients (MDTs and tablets) have been updated and has the ability to target a specific MDT / tablet, to force an update of a particular piece of data.

- **ScGuide** – this software runs on the satellite navigation devices installed in fire appliances and is installed in all callsign enabled vehicles. It facilitates the receipt of mobilizing messages from control, sending status back and autoplotting a suggested route to incident.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to re-procure the Airbus SAFEcommand™ system which includes modules for mobilising, guiding, messaging, crash recovery, risk information and chemical hazards.

2.2. The proposed contract length is three years with break clauses included.

2.3. A successful procurement will ensure that continuity of service is maintained allowing the MDT's installed in appliances and other Brigade vehicles to continue to receive information from the Vision mobilising system.

3. Values Comments

3.1. The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) notes the Fire Standards Board requirements around adopting and embedding the Core Code of Ethics at an individual and corporate level. Following extensive engagement, the LFC has introduced Brigade values which build on and do not detract from the Code of Ethics.

3.2. This report relates to the "service" value, by re-procuring the software for up to a further three years, the LFC can benefit from continued information interchange from MDT's and the Vision mobilising system.

4. Equality Comments

4.1. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service are required to have due regard to thePublic 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.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. 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.

4.6. 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.

4.7. 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.

An EIA has not been undertaken in respect of this report. If the report is approved and the Safecommand software is re-procured, the LFC will continue to use the Safecommand software that has been in use for a number of years. Continued use of this software will have no impact on any persons with the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation

5. Other considerations

Workforce comments

5.1. No workforce consultation is planned in respect of this report.

Sustainability comments

5.2. 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

5.3. The requirements have been assessed by the procurement team and the initial assessment on the route to market has identified the Crown Commercial Services, Vertical Application Solutions framework (RM 6259). This framework expires on 6 March 2027 so allows plenty of time to conduct a procurement using the Direct Award process. Procurement will continue to work with the ICT team to develop the procurement documentation and if appropriate identify alternative routes to market. The direct award process is considered appropriate for this as only Airbus can realistically meet the requirements due to the inherent dependencies with the current Vison mobilising system. Possible competitive routes will be looked at in the next

couple of years to inform the next procurement.

Communications comments

5.4. There are no communications implications

6. Financial comments

6.1 The report seeks approval to renew the existing Airbus SAFEcommand™ system agreement by a further three (3) years, upon expiry of the current agreement in August 2025. All costs related to the renewed agreement will be solely funded by LFC.

6.2 The system has been operational for a number of years, since it is an ongoing requirement. Hence there is sufficient budget cover for the agreement renewal across all years.

7 Legal Comments

7.1 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.

7.2 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 Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service (the Deputy Mayor).

7.3 Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said 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 Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required for the LFC to expend the sums set out in part 2 of this report.

7.4 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). Under section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 20014, 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.

7.5 This procurement will be carried out in compliance with the Procurement Regulations and the Commissioner's standing orders on procurement

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
	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 Two form: YES