

Decision title

Fire Engineering Qualifications

Recommendation by
General Counsel

Decision Number
LFC-0023-D

APPENDIX 2: OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE – COMMERCIAL

Summary

Following changes to the provision of Fire Safety training course from the Babcock's contract, this paper seeks approval from the London Fire Commissioner, to tender for the provision of the Fire Engineering Degree course for five years commencing 2018, to replace previous arrangements.

The course will assist London Fire brigade (LFB) to:

- satisfy statutory requirements and recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building regulations;
- satisfy London Safety Plan (LSP) 2017 commitments;
- satisfy draft 'London Plan' December 2017 (sections D10 and D11);
- improve public and firefighter safety in the built environment in London;
- reduce the impact of fire on businesses in London;
- provide leadership to the sector in terms of level of competence standards.

Decision

The London Fire Commissioner agrees to contract 56 course units of the Fire Engineering Degree Course from Glasgow Caledonian University.



Tom George
Deputy London Fire Commissioner

Date 18/6/2018.

Access to Information – Contact Officer	
Name	Steven Adams
Telephone	020 8555 1200
Email	governance@london-fire.gov.uk



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Fire Engineering Degree Course

Report to	Date
London Fire Commissioner	21 May 2018
Report by	Report number
Head of Fire Safety	LFC – 0023

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Summary

Following changes to the provision of Fire Safety training course from the Babcock's contract, this paper seeks approval from the London Fire Commissioner, to tender for the provision of the Fire Engineering Degree course for five years commencing 2018, to replace previous arrangements.

The course will assist London Fire brigade (LFB) to:

- satisfy statutory requirements and recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building regulations;
- satisfy London Safety Plan (LSP) 2017 commitments;
- satisfy draft 'London Plan' December 2017 (sections D10 and D11);
- improve public and firefighter safety in the built environment in London;
- reduce the impact of fire on businesses in London;
- provide leadership to the sector in terms of level of competence standards.

Recommendations

The London Fire Commissioner agrees to contract 56 course units of the Fire Engineering Degree Course from Glasgow Caledonian University.

Background

It has been agreed that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) will be removing Fire Safety and Health and Safety qualifications from the existing Babcock training contract. To enable the Fire Safety department to continue providing the Fire Engineering degree to the staff who had started the degree course and provide succession planning, new contractual arrangements are required.

The course is required to enable the LFB to have appropriately qualified staff to consider complex building control consultations and represent the service and sector on national bodies.

These qualifications are not new LFB requirements – they were previously being provided within the Babcock contract. The training budget remains unchanged – Training and Professional Development have created a separate budget code for audit purposes for courses that are now provided outside

the contract. Due to recent changes in governance and delegated authorities a number of other papers will be presented to the committee in the near future, for approval of new training contracts.

As a number of Fire Safety staff are already part way through their degrees and the units are not transferable, Glasgow Caledonian University are the only viable supplier. They are also the only provider who offers the following core subjects, delivered over three years by day release in London:

- Fire Engineering Analysis and Available Safe Egress time (ASET)
- Required Safe Egress Time (RESET)
- Intro to Fire Mathematics and Structures
- Fire Engineering Design and Risk Management (FEDRM)
- Introduction to CAD and CFD
- Fire Dynamics
- Structural Fire Protection
- Project and Programme Management principles
- Fire Safety Design & Regulation (FSDR)
- Dynamic Systems Design 2
- Fire Engineering Design (FED) & Risk Management 2 (RM2)
- Fire Investigation
- Evacuation Systems Design
- Dissertation.

The contractor has been supplying the LFB via Babcock for the last three years with no issues and offers the best value for money at the present time. We do not use this supplier for any other courses at the moment.

The graph below illustrates how many students will be attending the course for the life of the contract and how many will be studying each financial year. The shaded boxes show the numbers of staff who are in the process of completing the degree. This contract must be in place by June 2018 so that existing students can advise the University they have the funding to continue on the course, without this they will not be able to complete their studies.

No students	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022
Year 1	5	5	5		
Year 2	4	5	5	5	
Year 3	3	4	5	5	5

Staff who under take the Fire Engineering degree with the LFB have to sign a reimbursement agreement. They also have to agree to commit of the three-year course and to between 25 to 30 hours of

personal time per week for ongoing course work.

The current cost for one year of the cost is £3.8k. An example of an alternative provider is UCLAN they are based in Preston and offer the course in a two-week block release format over four years. The cost of the course per year is £9000 per candidate, not including the additional cost of travel and hotels.

The Fire Safety Department started training of a number of staff in this qualification following the Bickerdike Allen report (1990). The report (1990) highlighted that fire engineering was a developing industry and that the competence of those reviewing the designs needed to significantly improve. Essentially the competence of those reviewing fire engineered solutions should be of a similar level to that of those designing the solutions. Following that report LFB created the major projects group and committed to ensuring that their specialist officers undertook a fire engineering degree to acknowledge the expected competence. Since then the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) (previously Chief Fire Officers' Association) have set their own expectations for a fire engineer competence standard which was developed by their Fire Engineering and Technical Standards group in 2013.

In order to achieve our future ambitions and meet the demands of the increasingly complex nature of the built environment in London, LFB needs to maintain a competent and qualified Fire Engineering Group.

LFB Fire Engineers hold positions on a range of technical and standards bodies. Failure to have available qualified staff could potentially lead to removal from these bodies, with impact on LFB influence over national fire safety strategies.

This qualification is one of the elements that make up different career pathways within the Fire Safety Department.

Finance comments

This report recommends that expenditure of [REDACTED] plus inflation is agreed to fund 56 course units of a Fire Engineering Degree Course, over a five-year contract. The cost of this will be contained within the Training and Professional Development Department's budget.

Workforce comments

This is not a subject that has required staff side consultation. Staff side will have access to the report when it is under consideration by the LFC, and will have the opportunity to submit comments in the normal way.

Legal comments

General Counsel has reviewed this paper and has no comments.

Sustainability implications

This course option provides reduced travel for staff over alternative providers. The central London location provides good accessibility by public transport and no on-site facility for car parking.

Equalities implications

Cultural change note the significant commitment in terms of personal study hours (25 – 30 hours per week) and would recommend that the equality impact assessment includes support arrangements for all candidates particularly those with disabilities, carers or lone parenting responsibilities.

[REDACTED]