LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Decision title

Desktop Improvement Project

Recommendation by	Decision Number
Chief Information Officer	LFC-0064-D

Protective marking: **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**
Publication status: Published in full

Summary

This report seeks approval for the expenditure for external resources to deliver the Desktop Improvement Project. The key objectives of the project are to upgrade the Windows 2016 operating system, including the web browser, and allow for the upgrade of Microsoft Office software on the Citrix / 'terminal services' ('thin client') desktop. Budgetary provision has been made in the Capital Plan for external staff and supplier resources to support this project, and this report seeks agreement to a delegated authority to approve expenditure.

Decision

The London Fire Commissioner delegates the approval for the expenditure on desktop improvement project to the Chief Information Officer.

[signature]

Tom George
Deputy London Fire Commissioner

Date 27/3/19.

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LFB
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

Desktop improvement project: approval of expenditure

Report to	Date
Fire and Resilience Board	16 October 2018

Report by	Report number
Chief Information Officer	LFC-0064

Protective marking: **OFFICIAL - Sensitive**
Publication status: Published with redactions

Summary
This report seeks approval for the expenditure for external resources to deliver the Desktop Improvement Project. The key objectives of the project are to upgrade the Windows 2016 operating system, including the web browser, and allow for the upgrade of Microsoft Office software on the Citrix / 'terminal services' ('thin client') desktop. Budgetary provision has been made in the Capital Plan for external staff and supplier resources to support this project, and this report seeks agreement to a delegated authority to approve expenditure.

Recommendations
The London Fire Commissioner delegates the approval for the expenditure on desktop improvement project to the Chief Information Officer.

Background
1. The Brigade currently uses a Citrix / zero client ('terminal services') infrastructure to provide the majority of desktop services to (just under 6,000) end users. This environment supports the common desktop that all Brigade staff use on a daily basis and includes regularly used applications such as the Microsoft Office suite of products.

2. The Citrix environment currently operates on top of a Microsoft Server 2008 operating system. Microsoft has given notice that support for this operating system is to be withdrawn in 18 months time. Additionally, support for the Internet Explorer 11 browser, currently used by the Brigade, is also to be withdrawn.

3. The withdrawal of support for the current operating environment will result in no further updates or security enhancements being released for these products. This would result in the Brigade being exposed to an unacceptable level of risk from both malware and software failure. Should a failure occur, all Brigade users would be affected to a greater or lesser degree as this would result in users not being able to access data and would cause wide spread disruption.

4. Additionally, the Brigade uses third party software applications that will only be supported by the respective suppliers if we are operating on currently supported Windows operating systems / tools.

5.   Therefore, the Brigade needs to upgrade the Windows Server operating system and the web browser, and the logical follow up is to update the Office suite at the same time (although this is part of a separate project – see below).

Proposal

6.   It is proposed to upgrade the current Citrix environment from the Windows Server 2008 version to the latest supported version of operating system. This will provide a Windows 10 'look and feel' for the desktop, and many Brigade users will be familiar with this interface as they are potentially using it on personal home devices. In addition, elements of the desktop environment will also be upgraded, including the web browser to the latest Microsoft offering.

7.   The complementary 'Modern Workplace' project will deliver an upgraded version of the Office product suite to all users, as outlined in the separate report to the Board (LFC-0057) which was agreed on 15 August. Delivery of this Modern Workplace project, which also includes the introduction of SharePoint online and Exchange online, will be coordinated with the Desktop Improvement Project to deliver the Office 365 online product suite for infrequent users (e.g. fire stations users up and including to Watch Manager), and the online / Office 365 product suite to frequent users (mainly SM and above, and office based staff). The upgrade of the server environment will need to be completed to support the introduction of the latest desktop version of the Office suite.

8.   All line of business applications that have a front end that is provided via Citrix will be transferred to the latest operating environment. There will need to be a comprehensive testing regime introduced and almost certainly a degree of change for some applications to enable them to operate in the new environment.

Scope of the Project

9.   The project is limited to upgrading the Citrix / 'terminal services' operating system, end user desktop environment and ensuring that all relevant line of business applications run in the new environment. To achieve this, we will need to utilise existing Brigade contracts to employ someone with technical 'terminal services' skills. This is likely to cost some £500 a day (which is the going market rate for this type of skill set) and the resource would be needed for about 300 days to support delivery of the project. The updating of server software may require adjustments to the Brigade's 'line of business' software systems (probably between 10/15 systems, subject to testing) to ensure compatibility with the latest server software, and such changes will be delivered via the contracts already in place with those suppliers providing support for those systems impacted. The total project budget, as set out in para 10, is therefore an estimate, although spend will be contained within the allocated sum.

Costs

10.   There is currently £250,000 in the approved capital plan to fund this work with indicative phasing and spend as set out in the table below. The costs for the upgraded Windows server software licences is already covered in existing revenue budgets held by ICT department.

	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Technical staff resources	£50,000	£100,000	£150,000
System changes		£100,000	£100,000
	£50,000	**£200,000**	**£250,000**

Procurement action proposed

11.   There is no new procurement activity as a result of this paper. ICT will be making use of contracts for staff recruitment and systems support that are currently in place.

Finance comments

12. This project is included within the current capital programme at a projected cost of £250,000. If this scheme was funded from external borrowing the annual debt charges would be £56,000 per annum based on a five-year life and an interest rate of 2.4 per cent. The costs for upgrading the Windows server software licences are included in the existing ICT revenue budget.

Workforce comments

13. There are no plans for staff-side consultation.

Legal comments

14. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 at section 5A allows the Commissioner to do anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying-out of any of its functions (its "functional purposes"), anything it considers appropriate for purposes incidental to its functional purposes, anything it considers appropriate for purposes indirectly incidental to its functional purposes through any number of removes. The purchase and upgrading of IT systems by the Commissioner along with the engagement of external contractors to facilitate said purchase and upgrading falls within this power.

15. Procurement have confirmed that there are existing contract arrangements for both staff resources and system changes. Therefore, there is not a need for any new tendering exercises to facilitate the requirements set out in this report.

Sustainability implications

16. There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

17. There are opportunities within the new software to leverage enhanced accessibility features and facilities for DDA users.

Consultation

Name/role	Method consulted
CS Directorate Board members	Meeting on 21 August 2018
Central Procurement Services	By email (Catherine Bray)
Head of Finance (for finance paragraph)	By email (Michelle Gooch)
General Counsel (for legal paragraph)	By email (Tom Davies)