



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

Procurement of End User Devices

Report to

Corporate Services Directorate Board
Operational Delivery Directorate Board
Commissioner's Board
Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date

18 January 2022
26 January 2022
9 February 2022
29 March 2022

Report classification

For Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following LFB strategic priorities

Seizing the future
Delivering excellence

Report number – LFC-0667y

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DECISION-MAKER

I agree the recommended decision below.

Andy Roe
London Fire Commissioner

Date

This decision was signed
remotely on the 21 June 2022

Executive Summary

The report is seeking authority to commit expenditure to replace a variety of end user computing devices that have reached the end of their useful life and will no longer be supportable going forward. This equipment includes both desktop and mobile devices.

Devices that are end of life pose challenges in terms of supportability and are at increased risk of becoming infected with malware as there are often no further security updates available. In addition, the user experience degrades over time as some new features of software releases may not be available on older devices.

The proposal is to enter into a call off arrangement that is split into three lots for the supply of end user computer hardware, peripherals in support of the home working initiative, the re organisation of Union Street and equipment replacement cycles over a three-year contract. These lots would enable the replacement purchase of 'zero client' devices at stations, and a mechanism to order additional hardware as required to replace devices that have reached the end of their useful life. A 'zero client' model means that there is no software installed on the local device. All of the computing power is centralised in a number of servers with the 'zero client' connecting to these servers remotely.

For the London Fire Commissioner

That the London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to Assistant Director Procurement & Commercial to enter into a contract for the provision of end user compute devices, for a three-year period, up to the value contained in part 2 of this report, following completion of a procurement exercise..

1. Introduction and background

1.1 The LFC adopted a 'thin client' computing architecture several years ago which has evolved over time with the over 2,200 devices deployed at a number of sites, including at fire stations where devices are shared between station-based staff. The thin client model differs from a traditional personal computer (PC) based model in that there is little intelligence in the local device. Instead, all the computing power is centralised in a number of centrally based servers with the thin clients connecting to these servers remotely. This model has subsequently evolved into a 'zero client' model meaning no software, other than device management tools, is installed on the local device. In response to the Covid pandemic, office-based staff have now been issued with a personal tablet/laptop and other peripheral equipment to allow flexible working at home or in the office instead of using a 'zero client' terminal in the office; report LFC0429 *Facilitating Flexible Working for Staff at Union Street HQ*.

Replacement of zero client' devices

1.2 Aside from office-based staff, the 'zero client' desktop will remain in use for the foreseeable future as it still provides the most cost-effective means of delivering software and applications to any location with a small ICT support team. The solution now delivers over 150 applications to users. Zero client devices still provide the most cost-effective solution for staff with a fixed base such as fire stations, where alternative solutions are now in place for mobile working through Windows tablets on and mobile data terminals (MDTs) on appliances.

1.3 The current 'zero client' devices (10Zig) in use across the Brigade were procured in 2016 and are now reaching the end of their supportable life and require upgrading to the next generation. Whilst recent changes at LFB Headquarters to support more flexible working patterns have resulted in large numbers of devices being removed (with staff using personally issued tablets and laptops as a tactical response to the Covid pandemic (LFC0429)), there is still

a requirement for over 1,600 'zero client' devices at fire stations and other office sites that need to be replaced.

Replacement 'end of life' laptops/tablets

- 1.4 Whilst 350 staff have recently been issued with a personal tablet/laptop in line with the decision LFC0429, a significant number of laptops/tablets (1600) already in use before the new roll-out.
- 1.5 ICT have an established three-year rolling replacement programme for the replacement of these devices. To ensure that they they are kept up to date and able to receive regular updates and can be maintained.
- 1.6 With these multiple requirements (laptops / tablets and zero clients), the logical approach is to combine them together in a single procurement and benefit from a shared approach to procurement.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The proposal supports the strategic intent for transformation in the workplace (e.g. flexible working) and will allow the organisation to evolve and meet the challenges of the future. By providing end user equipment that is up to date, supported and which meets user requirements, outcomes such as flexible working and collaboration can be achieved and enable real transformation.
- 2.2 This proposal also supports the ever increasing need to ensure ICT systems are secured against all forms of cyber-attack and malicious activities. End user devices, like tablets/laptops, that are no longer able to receive security updates can pose a significant threat to LFB infrastructure.

3. Costs

- 3.1. The exact cost may vary due to several factors including general market conditions and exchange rates, but estimates are based on current market costs of the equipment are set out in the table of part 2 of this report.
- 3.2. These costs can be met from provisions made in the current capital strategy; this will require some re profiling of the budgets established for the next six years as the interruption in the replacement programme over the last two years has caused some misalignment. The additional funding required as a result of the interruption of the replacement programme, can be met from the underspend in the capital project to provide replacement audio visual facilities at fire stations.

4. Equality comments

- 4.1. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience 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.
- 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.
- 4.8. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed in relation to this procurement. The EIA has overall shown a neutral impact on groups with prescribed characteristics. However, for those staff with disabilities there were positive outcomes. The new devices have Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 software installed on the which provides accessibility tools to allow users with disabilities enhanced access. The devices would also allow access to the LFB Citrix desktop providing everyone with access to specific software designed to help staff with disabilities. In addition, the ability for staff to opt for a tablet rather than a laptop device means that the devices are easier to transport as the tablets weigh just 1.17 kilos, which may be beneficial to those staff with certain physical disabilities.

5. Other Considerations

Workforce comments

- 5.1. As the report is to replace existing devices with modern alternatives, there are no plans for consultation beyond the governance process. The Chief Information Officer will ensure that a

relevant communication plan is in place to inform all staff of the logistics and timing of replacement equipment.

Sustainability comments

- 5.2. Any new procurement activity will need to be undertaken in line with the GLA group Responsible Procurement policy. As part of the delivery of this policy, the Greater London Authority group has affiliated with *Electronics Watch*, which requires the inclusion of additional terms and conditions for contracts with significant hardware purchases. The terms aim to improve the transparency of the supply chain and management of any non-compliance with labour standards identified with the support of *Electronics Watch*. Where hardware replacement of considerable value forms part of the requirement for any of the options proposed, additional terms covering ethical sourcing will need to be included in the tender or re-negotiation.

Procurement comments

- 5.3. A number of frameworks have been considered for use to tender this requirement, and decision has been made to utilise the LPP (London Procurement Partnership) Information, Management & Technology (IM&T) Framework which consists of suitably experienced, capable, qualified and resourced suppliers available for use by local authorities and third sector organisations as well as NHS Trusts, clinical commissioning groups, GP services and other health and social care providers within the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. This framework offers suitable terms and conditions, competitive rates, and a sufficient number of value-added resellers to encourage competition. It is also accessible to the London Fire Commissioner.
- 5.4. Collaboration with the NFCC for a CCS (Crown Commercial Service) aggregation has been considered. However, on further investigation the timescales do not align and nor does the contract duration. Therefore, this option has been discounted. Collaboration with the GLA is still being investigated.
- 5.5 Any new procurement activity will need to be undertaken in line with the GLA group responsible procurement policy. As part of the delivery of this policy, the GLA group has affiliated with *Electronics Watch*, which requires the inclusion of additional terms and conditions for contracts with significant hardware purchases. The terms aim to improve the transparency of the supply chain and management of any non-compliance with labour standards identified with the support of *Electronics Watch*. Where hardware replacement of considerable value forms part of the requirement for any of the options proposed, additional terms covering ethical sourcing will need to be included in the tender or re-negotiation

6. Financial comments

- 6.1. This report recommends that a contract is entered into for the provision of end user computer devices over a three-year period. The financial cost and funding for this is set out in the part 2 report

7. Legal comments

- 7.1 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.

- 7.2 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 Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor").
- 7.3 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...". The decision to purchase new end user computer devices for the value set out Part 2 which exceeds the financial threshold referred to above will therefore require approval from the Deputy Mayor.
- 7.4 The proposed recommendation is also for the London Fire Commissioner to delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial to make final award of contracts, which is permitted under Part 4 of the LFC Scheme of Governance.
- 7.5 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"). Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 2004 the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting. Section 5A also allows the Commissioner to do anything incidental or indirectly incidental to his functional purposes.
- 7.6 The report confirms the relevant end user computer devices will be procured via a call-off framework under the London Procurement Partnership Information, Management & Technology Framework Agreement, which is permitted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 7.7 Up to date end user computer devices will enable Brigade staff to operate effectively and efficiently in their day to day role.

List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential
1.	None	

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – YES