

Decision title

Replacement of wireless (wifi) access points – acceptance of tender

Recommendation by

Chief Information Officer

Decision Number

LFC-0233y-D

Protective marking: **OFFICIAL**

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Summary

Report LFC-0233y seeks approval to update the Brigades ageing wireless (wifi) infrastructure by replacing all wireless local area network (WLAN1) access points with up to date equipment.

The WLAN equipment is required to supply wifi services to Brigade staff and visitors at all sites.

Decision

The London Fire Commissioner awards a contract for the replacement of the Brigade's WLAN infrastructure, after completion of a OJEU compliant procurement exercise, for a period of up to three years to [REDACTED] at a total cost not exceeding [REDACTED]

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Date 28-11-19

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Replacement of wireless (wifi) access points – acceptance of tender

Meeting

Commissioner's Board
Fire and Resilience Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date

14 August 2019
17 September 2019

Report by

Chief Information Officer

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Summary

The paper seeks approval to update the Brigades aging wireless (wifi) infrastructure by replacing all wireless local area network (WLAN¹) access points with up to date equipment.

The WLAN equipment is required to supply wifi services to Brigade staff and visitors at all sites.

Recommendations

That the London Fire Commissioner awards a contract for the replacement of the Brigade's WLAN infrastructure, after completion of a OJEU compliant procurement exercise, for a period of up to three years to [REDACTED]² at a total cost not exceeding [REDACTED].

¹ A wireless LAN (WLAN) is a wireless computer network that links two or more devices using wireless communication to form a local area network (LAN) within a limited area such as an office building or fire station. Both wifi and WLAN mean the same — they both refer to a wireless network that can transfer data at high speeds.

² [REDACTED]

Background

1. The Brigade's network infrastructure includes a wireless local area network (WLAN) environment which was initially installed in 2007 when the organisation moved to the headquarters in Union Street. Following the installation at Union Street, a subsequent project extended the wireless capabilities (wifi) to all other Brigade premises.
2. The network infrastructure itself is a combination of Wide Area Network (WAN)³ and Metropolitan Area Network (MAN)⁴ topologies. The WAN has a total of 103 remote sites and the MAN consists of four main sites connected via 10 Gigabyte (GB) BT circuits and one with 1GB connection.
3. This infrastructure provides facilities for staff, visitors and partner agencies to access wifi in any Brigade building. Without access to wifi, the ability of some staff to work in an agile manner (i.e. at different Brigade locations using tablets or other devices) would be significantly reduced. In replacing the WLAN infrastructure, the intention is to provide easier wifi access for staff (via an automatic logon of authorised devices when entering a building), and simpler visitor use of wifi via published login details, for example, in meeting rooms.

Requirements

4. To ensure that the Brigade is able to offer a scalable and reliable service into the future, the entire wireless access point estate now needs to be replaced. This will involve the decommissioning of existing and installation of new wireless access points (532 in total) at 107 Brigade sites.
5. The Brigade network infrastructure is built around Cisco hardware/software. Therefore, in replacing the access points, it is essential that compatibility with the existing Cisco deployed infrastructure is maintained. Changing from Cisco hardware/software would represent significant additional expenditure for the Brigade requiring a complete replacement of the network infrastructure, and would divert staff resources needed for other projects. As such the procured devices must be manufactured by Cisco.
6. The wireless access points will be installed throughout the Brigade in both station and office locations. It is therefore essential that we take deployment environment considerations into account when selecting the particular Cisco model to be deployed. Currently, wifi access points at stations are within a rugged metal enclosure that is designed to prevent accidental damage from a variety of station based activities. Wifi access points in office locations have no such requirement and are more aesthetically designed.
7. An exercise to visit 107 Brigade sites to remove legacy equipment, install and test new equipment, is substantial and cannot be resourced from within existing ICT staffing resources. It is the intention, as part of this procurement, for a contractor to provide the following services:
 - Site surveys (where appropriate, to determine optimum location of equipment) at office sites only. Deployment to stations will be in their existing locations.

³ A **wide area network (WAN)** is a telecommunications **network** or **computer network** that extends over a large geographical distance/place

⁴ A **metropolitan area network (MAN)** is a **computer network** that interconnects users with **computer** resources in a geographic **area** or **region** larger than that covered by even a large **local area network (LAN)** but smaller than the **area** covered by a wide **area network (WAN)**.

- Removal and disposal of legacy equipment in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive.
- Installation / configuration / testing of new wireless access points at 107 Brigade sites.
- Professional services to support the migration from the present backend system to the new solution.
- Project management (includes all above activities).
- User acceptance testing / handover / documentation.
- On-going support of delivered solution (if not separately covered by Cisco agreements).
- To work with the Brigade ICT network team, as necessary, to optimise the wifi solution.

GovWifi

8. The updating of the Brigade's WLAN infrastructure will allow deployment of GovWifi at Brigade premises. GovWifi is a system that is now widely available across the public sector which allows staff and visitors to use a single user login to connect to guest wifi across multiple GovWifi locations that support access to this service.
9. At recent collaboration board, meeting a request was made by the Mayor's Chief of Staff to GLA group bodies to offer this service. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) already has this capability and the LFB's WLAN refresh provides an opportunity for the Brigade to offer the same functionality.

Collaboration opportunities

10. In 2018, the Brigade explored the possibility of collaborating with the London Ambulance Service (LAS), who had similar requirements at the time. However, the LAS timescales were significantly ahead of the Brigade as there were higher ICT priorities to address at the time.
11. Details of the proposed procurement have been shared via the NFCC ICT Managers group to all fire and rescue services. No collaboration partners have been identified at this time.
12. In respect of the GovWifi installation, colleagues at the MPS have already installed this capability and have offered to provide assistance to the Brigade.

Costs

13. It was not possible to fully establish the likely cost resulting from this tendering exercise in advance. However, estimates from market research based on commonly available hardware list prices and project management costs from previous projects, indicated that the project will cost around £853K (subject to inflation). The outcome of the tender exercise is within that estimate. All expenditure will fall in 2019/20, if tender acceptance approvals are secured by end September.

Procurement

14. The Director of Corporate Services initiated the tendering process for replacement wifi access points (under the delegated authority granted to her) and the procurement exercise is being carried out by staff from the ICT and Procurement departments.
15. There is currently no suitable Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework available for use as it has recently expired and the replacement framework is yet to be awarded.
16. A mini competition was conducted under the Health Trust Europe (HTE) Information Communication Technology (ICT) Solutions Framework, Lot 1 (IT Hardware) however no compliant bids were received.

17. Therefore the procurement is being carried out using the Pan London ICT Framework (Lot 4), which was tendered by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea on behalf of the London Public Sector. The aim of the framework is to deliver best value to London's public sector through a catalogue price structure, faster cost effective procurement process and flexibility. The framework offers a catalogue of services by BT which is supported by a number of the market leading IT/Communications vendors. This framework has offered an alternative route to market when there has not been a collaborative opportunity available via the GLA, or a suitable CCS framework. The framework also allows for a tender exercise to be carried out. Formal benchmarking is regularly carried out by an external company against a minimum of eight top quartile peers and an overall 'value for money' rating has been awarded.
18. An Invitation to Participate was published on 15 July 2019. The evaluation is based on the method statement and tender response. The evaluation consists of a number of mandatory pass / fail criteria. The price element is weighted at 25 per cent, the quality element is weighted at 45 per cent, and the technical element is weighted at 30 per cent. Each section also contains sub-criteria (please see the table below). The evaluation has been developed jointly by staff from ICT and Procurement utilising commercial knowledge of this sector and the importance of various elements to the overall success of the project.

Criteria		Section Weighting	Overall Weighting
Price	Engagement / Planning	15%	25%
	Installation Surveys	15%	
	Bill of Goods / Requirements	15%	
	Installation and Sign-Off (Blocks of 10)	15%	
	Commissioning	40%	
Quality	An evaluation plan, for transition to the new contract (including roles and responsibilities, and timescales)	20%	45%
	Your approach to installation	20%	
	Management of functional aspects and details how this will be adopted across all fire stations	20%	
	Your approach to dealing with environmental waste	20%	
	Approach to customer service, initial support and details of service levels for the duration of the contract	20%	
Technical Merit	Saleability	15%	30%
	Suitability of access points	15%	
	Design solution	15%	
	Level of professional services / manpower / technical services	15%	
	Test plan / Handover pack	15%	
	Documentation	15%	
	Environmental considerations of equipment to be provided	10%	
Mandatory	List of mandatory WLAN requirements	PASS / FAIL	

19. The tender submitted by [REDACTED] is compliant and the evaluation indicates that the pricing submitted is within the budget set aside for the project by the Brigade. Officers are able to confirm that the

pricing submitted is competitive and within the expected range for the services required, and accords with up to date market research.

Financial comments

20. This report recommends that delegated authority is given to approve total project expenditure of £853k for the replacement of wifi infrastructure. The report notes that this is still an estimate and that all expenditure will be incurred in the 2019/20 financial year.
21. There is a capital budget of £853k in 2019/20 within the existing capital programme for this project. If the project is delivered within this budget and the scheme is funded by external borrowing, the annual debt charge would be £185k, being an annual interest charge of £15k per annum, based on an interest rate of 1.7 per cent and an annual debt repayment of £170k, based on a five year life.

Workforce comments

22. There are no plans for staff side consultation..

Legal comments

23. 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.
24. 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").
25. 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...".
26. The Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required for the Commissioner to award a contract for the replacement of the Brigade's wifi infrastructure to the successful bidder, up to a value of [REDACTED] after completion of a OJEU compliant procurement exercise.
27. The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, under which the London Fire Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of it's functions.
28. The General Counsel also notes that the proposed procurement route for the replacement of the Brigade's wifi infrastructure is in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea have conducted a compliant OJEU procurement in accordance with section 33 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to set up the Pan London ICT Framework, from which the Commissioner is able to make a compliant call off.

Sustainability implications

29. The procurement activity for the WLAN hardware and the associated technologies described in this report, will need to be undertaken in line with the GLA group Responsible Procurement

policy. The Brigade has recently become an affiliate of Electronics Watch, which requires the inclusion of additional terms and conditions for contract.

30. These terms and conditions 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. HTE and the Pan London ICT Framework do not currently include Electronics Watch terms and conditions within their frameworks as they are not an affiliate member, however we will seek to include this in the special terms and conditions for consideration by the tenderers.

Equalities implications

31. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the London Fire Commissioner when she makes decisions. The duty requires her to have regard to the need to:
 - a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
32. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
33. An equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out in respect the proposal to update the WLAN access points. The EIA concludes that the change will not have a disproportionately adverse effect on any persons with a particular characteristic due to no change in process nor availability of appropriate equipment. The WLAN access points will be updated providing a modern, resilient wifi capacity that will benefit staff and visitors via increased coverage within Brigade buildings.
34. The London Fire Commissioner has considered the proposals and her duty under the Act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.