

Operational Research (including modelling) Services

Report to:

Investment & Finance Board.....
Commissioner's Board
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board.....
London Fire Commissioner

Date:

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07 July 2026
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Report by:

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Authorising Head of Service:

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Report classification:

For decision

For publication

Values met

Service

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval to re-procure the continued provision and development of the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT), together with associated operational research and modelling services, for a period of three years, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods (3+1+1). The current contract expires at the beginning of November 2026.

The London Fire Commissioner (LFC) has an ongoing requirement for specialist consultancy support to maintain, enhance, and further develop the DCT, which underpins evidence-based decision-making across the organisation. Alongside this, operational research and modelling expertise is required to support the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and wider organisational needs.

Re-procurement via a Direct Award under the Government Commercial Agency's Vertical Application Solutions Framework will ensure continuity of these critical DCT services, secure ongoing specialist expertise, and maintain a fully supported tool that remains operational without interruption.

Recommended decision:

For the London Fire Commissioner

The LFC delegates authority to the Assistant Director Procurement & Commercial to enter into a contract for procuring operational research and modelling services and use of the DCT, be entered into in accordance with the arrangements set out in Part Two of this report.

1 Introduction and background

1.1 In November 2022, a contract was awarded to ORH for the provision of operational research and modelling services to support the development of proposals for the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and other organisational priorities (e.g. fire station site search).

1.2 As part of this work, the supplier, with the Brigade support, developed the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT), which is now used within the London Operations Centre (LOC). The DCT provides real-time operational research and simulation modelling to support Control managers in making temporary appliance moves during periods of high demand or reduced resource availability.

1.3 The current contract covers two key areas:

- **Lot 1: Operational research and modelling services.**

Provides access to specialist consultancy services designed to help emergency services optimise resource use and improve operational effectiveness. This work is underpinned by spatial interaction modelling and operational research (OR) methodologies, supporting the Brigade in addressing complex resource planning and deployment challenges.

- **Lot 2: Provision and maintenance of the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT).**

Covers the development, maintenance, and ongoing support of the DCT. The DCT is a core operational system that underpins real-time decision-making in London Fire Brigade's Control Room. It enables LOC Control Commanders to determine whether pumping and specialist appliances need to be temporarily relocated to maintain safe and effective cover across London. The tool integrates risk profiles, historical and predicted incident demand, and live operational data to identify deficiencies and recommend standby moves. It has become integral to the safe running of Control operations. The DCT is now embedded in day-to-day operational practice and is relied upon continuously to maintain London-wide fire cover. Any interruption to its availability would have a direct and immediate impact on operational resilience, risk management, and the Brigade's ability to maintain safe cover levels.

1.4 To ensure continuity of these critical services, LFC is seeking to re-procure both the DCT and operational research consultancy via a Direct Award under Blue Light Solutions (lot 5) of the Vertical Application Solutions Framework - Government Commercial Agency as the preferred compliant route to market.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The objective of this report is to secure authority to re-procure the continued use and development of the DCT, along with operational research and modelling services, for a period of three years, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods (3+1+1).

2.2 This includes ensuring continuity, compliance and operational effectiveness by maintaining and developing the DCT, sustaining specialist operational research capability, and using the Government Commercial Agency's Vertical Application Solutions Framework as a reliable and compliant route to market.

- 2.3** The intention is to support ongoing and future organisational needs by enabling scenario modelling and evidence-based decision-making for the CRMP and wider priorities. This will be achieved while ensuring the DCT remains fully compatible with existing Microsoft-based systems, and is tested, proven, and operational by 1 November 2026 to avoid any disruption to service.
- 2.4** Successful procurement will secure uninterrupted access to specialist consultancy expertise and continued support for the DCT.

3 Values Comments

- 3.1** The 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** The Brigade values are:
- Service: we put the public first
 - Integrity: we act with honesty
 - Teamwork: we work together and include everyone
 - Equity: we treat everyone fairly according to their needs
 - Courage: we step up to the challenge
 - Learning: we listen so that we can improve
- 3.3** This report delivers against the Service value. The procurement of operational research and modelling services and continued use of the DCT will allow the LFC to ensure that London is making the most effective use of limited resources in maintaining the safety of Londoners.

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 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 EIA has not been undertaken in respect of this report. The operational research and modelling services and DCT will serve to optimise resource use and ensure that the LFC resources respond in the most effective and efficient way. The continued use of this tool 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 There are no plans for workforce consultation as a result of this procurement.

Sustainability comments

5.2 The Sustainable Development team have been engaged on any responsible procurement impacts during the procurement process and evaluation criteria.

5.3 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 process.

Procurement comments

- 5.4** The proposed procurement of operational research and modelling services, together with the continued use and development of the DCT, will be undertaken in accordance with the London Fire Commissioner's (LFC) procurement procedures through a compliant procurement process. The current arrangements expire on 05.11.2026, and the LFC has an ongoing requirement for specialist consultancy services to support delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), including operational research, modelling capability, and associated analytical tools.
- 5.5** Procurement proposes to re-procure this business requirement, through a direct award under the Government Commercial Agency (previously called CCS) -Vertical Application Solutions Framework (RM6259), Lot 5 – Blue Light Solutions, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). The proposed contract term is three years, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods (3+1+1). This is considered to be the most reliable, efficient, and compliant route to market. The procurement process will commence once the final Statement of Requirements has been received from the relevant stakeholders, and the appropriate governance approvals have been secured.
- 5.6** It is the LFC's intention to award a single contract to a supplier capable of delivering both the operational research and modelling consultancy services and the DCT solution. These elements are operationally and technically interdependent, with the consultancy services and tool required to function in tandem. Procuring the services under a single contract is therefore considered essential to ensure service coherence, accountability for interdependencies, efficient delivery, and the achievement of optimal operational outcomes and value for money.
- 5.7** In considering value for money, Procurement and stakeholders have reviewed the market and assessed whether alternative suppliers could provide an equivalent solution to the Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT). This assessment identified that ORH is currently the only supplier offering a dedicated Dynamic Cover Tool specifically designed for emergency services, combining operational research, modelling capability and real-time deployment optimisation. Whilst there are wider analytics, modelling and consultancy providers operating within the public sector and emergency services markets, none were identified as offering a like-for-like product with equivalent functionality, operational integration and proven deployment within UK fire and ambulance services. As part of this assessment, procurement undertook market scanning to identify alternative dynamic cover and real-time optimisation solutions, reviewed ORH's track record and established use across UK emergency services, considered pricing against previous ORH engagements and comparable operational research consultancy rates, and evaluated the operational benefits delivered through the tool, including improved resource coverage, operational efficiency and enhanced decision-support capability. In addition, commercial negotiations have secured a reduction in the overall contract price associated with the transition from an on-premise solution to a cloud-hosted environment. Taking account of the costs, risks and resource implications of procuring and implementing an alternative solution, the proposed direct award is considered to represent the most economically advantageous and value-for-money option for the Brigade.
- 5.8** The option of developing an equivalent in-house application has been explored in detail with the internal Performance and Business Analytics team, who confirmed that the Brigade does not currently possess the necessary capacity or specialist capability to undertake this work internally. Procurement has also engaged with wider business areas, including ICT, Operational Resilience, and Strategy and Planning stakeholders, all of whom would be directly impacted by this procurement, regarding the feasibility of undertaking a full competitive procurement exercise and transitioning to an alternative supplier. Feedback from these teams confirmed that this is not

considered feasible at present due to the number of concurrent system implementations across the organization, alongside the significant change management, onboarding, and training requirements that would arise from moving away from the incumbent supplier.

- 5.9** The Procurement and Commercial team will support the development of the framework call-off agreement documentation and engage with the required stakeholders to ensure that the procured solution aligns with the LFC's technical, analytical, information security, business continuity, strategic planning, and operational resilience requirements. The resulting contract will include appropriate provisions relating to service levels, security & data protection, system scalability, exit management, and contractual break clauses.

Communications comments

- 5.10** The proposed approach is not currently anticipated to require significant communication and engagement; any necessary communication and training will take place locally.
- 5.11** There may be a future opportunity to tell the story of the benefits of this work to LFB's stakeholders, in which case the Communication and Engagement Directorate will work with the project team to do so.
- 5.12** In addition, it is noted that colleagues in the project team are working toward making the DCT available on screens in stations. This is welcomed by the Internal Communication department, as a way of providing useful context for station-based colleagues on pan-London operational demand.

6 Financial comments

- 6.1** The report seeks authority to enter into a new contract for the provision of operational research and modelling services and use of the dynamic cover tool (DCT) by up to five years, upon expiry of the current agreement at the end of November 2026. The services and products to be provided by the contract will satisfy ongoing requirements for consultancy services for operational research, including modelling and services in support of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- 6.2** All costs related to the new agreement will be solely funded by the London Fire Commissioner revenue budget. The amount is set out in Part Two of this report.
- 6.3** A contract which provides these services and products has been operational for a number of years, since it is an ongoing requirement. Hence there is sufficient budget cover for the contract across all years.

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 Planning, Regeneration & the Fire Service (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...".
- 7.4** The Deputy Mayor's approval is accordingly required to authorise the London Fire Commissioner to commit revenue expenditure of up to the amount set out in the Part Two report for the purposes of procuring continued use and development of the DCT and operational research and modelling services.
- 7.5** The Commissioner may delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Procurement & Commercial to enter into a contract for procuring operational research and modelling services and use of the DCT, to be entered into in accordance with the arrangement set out in Part 2 of the Report.
- 7.6** The General Counsel has reviewed the report and notes that the arrangement proposed is consistent with the Commissioner's power under section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to do anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions.
- 7.7** Furthermore, under section 7 (2)(a) of the aforementioned legislation, the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting.
- 7.8** The General Counsel also notes at paragraph 5.4 of the Report that the proposed procurement, will be undertaken in accordance with the London Fire Commissioner's (LFC) procurement procedures through a compliant procurement process.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	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