

Procurement of a Replacement Backup System

Report to: IFB**Date:**

Investment & Finance Board.....	29 May 2025
Commissioner's Board	11 June 2025
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board.....	19 June 2025

Report by: Chief Information Officer

Report classification:

For decision

For publication

Values met

Service

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

The report seeks authority to procure a replacement "backup system" to replace the current system which has been in use for many years and is now considered obsolete. The "backup system" is used on a daily basis to backup data and when required "restore" data following systems failures or data corruption.

However, the LFC now seeks to deploy a modern backup solution that will build on our existing backup and recovery capabilities and add greater protection against modern threats such as ransomware.

For the London Fire Commissioner

The London Fire Commissioner delegates authority to the Assistant Director procurement and commercial to procure a replacement backup solution and award a contract for up to 5 years.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1. The "backup system" currently in use by the LFC is based around an on-premise backup platform. The "on premise" statement refers to the fact that all equipment required to backup LFC data is physical located within LFC data centers. Data is backed up to disk and subsequently to a tape platform, achieved through the implementation of a dedicated software package, "Veritas Backup Exec".
- 1.2. Servers and systems that are considered as "core" to service delivery are typically backed up to a number of disks at the Merton LOC. These backup sets are then duplicated to backup tapes for secure off-site storage. The backup sets taken in the initial backup are then duplicated to a set of disks in the LFC secondary datacentre at Stratford. This provides three copies of the backup set, two backup sets online (for short term retention and fast restores), and another set offsite stored on tape (for longer term recovery options).
- 1.3. Less critical systems and data are backed up directly to tape which again are relocated to an off-site storage location.
- 1.4. MS Office 365 data is not part of this backup process. This data is backed up directly in the Microsoft cloud, utilising other specialist software.

- 1.5. Backup and restore operations that relate the "Vision" mobilising system, are not part of this backup system as NEC (formally Capita) are responsible for the mobilising system operation.
- 1.6. The LFC now has a requirement to implement a modern backup system that is equipped to deal with modern day workloads and threats, including "ransomware". Specifically modern backup solutions are able to offer a range of benefits, compared to our existing solution and these are summarised below. It is expected that many or all of these features would be included in any replacement backup system.
- **Improved Data Protection:** Advanced encryption and security features that safeguard critical information against unauthorised access and cyber-threats, minimizing the risk of data breaches.
 - **Faster Backup and Recovery:** Incremental backups and deduplication allows for quicker backup processes, an increased number of online recovery points and faster data recovery. This has the potential to reduce downtime and enable rapid restoration of services in the event of a data loss incident.
 - **Scalability:** Scalability features can adapt to our organization's expanding data requirements. This flexibility ensures that the backup system remains reliable and efficient as the organisations use of data grows.
 - **Data Integrity:** Immutable storage¹ ensures the integrity of data by preventing any unauthorised or accidental modifications or deletions. Once data is backed up to immutable storage it becomes unchangeable, which safeguards against tampering, corruption, or malicious activities.
 - **Protection against Ransomware and Cyber Threats:** Immutable storage also acts as a defence against ransomware attacks and other cyber threats. As malicious actors seek to encrypt or delete data for extortion, immutable storage prevents them from modifying or deleting our backup data. This safeguard ensures that we can maintain access to our backup data and assist with avoidance of paying hefty ransoms.
 - **Disaster Recovery:** Immutable storage allows for the swift and seamless restoration of vital information, ensuring business continuity and minimizing downtime.
- Efficient Data Deduplication and Storage Optimization:** Immutable storage solutions often include technologies such as data deduplication and compression, which optimises storage efficiency. By identifying and eliminating duplicate data, we can reduce storage costs and achieve more effective utilisation of storage resources.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The objective of this report is to secure authorisation to procure a new backup system, ensuring that the LFC has a system that is for purpose in respect to modern workloads.

¹ Immutable storage is a data storage method where once data is written, it cannot be modified, deleted, or overwritten for a set period, ensuring data integrity and protection against unauthorized changes.

- 2.2 The proposed contract length is three years, with options to extend by up to a further two years in one year increments. A break clause will be included in the contract.
- 2.3 A successful procurement will ensure that continuity of service is maintained in respect of the ability of the LFC to backup and recover critical data in the event of any systems incident.

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 This paper relates to the "service" value, by re-procuring a new backup solution for up to five years the LFC will be equipped to provide a modern backup and recovery service.

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 as the outcome (if approved) will simply mean that the existing backup system is replaced by a newer system which will be transparent to all but selected ICT staff.
- 4.9 An EIA has not been undertaken in respect of this report. If the report is approved it will simply mean that the existing backup system is replaced by a newer system which will be transparent to all but selected ICT staff. Use of this system 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 No workforce consultation is planned in respect of this report.

Sustainability comments

- 5.2 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

- 5.3 The proposed procurement of a modern backup solution will be undertaken in line with the London Fire Commissioner's by following a compliant competitive procurement procedure. The market route for 3+2 period shall be confirmed once the statement of Requirement has been finalized by ICT and shared. This could be via an existing public sector framework agreement under PCR 2015 that allows for direct award / mini-competition, or a flexible competition under the new Procurement Act 2023 guidelines depending on which route provides the best value for money and most appropriately meets the LFC's technical and operational requirements.
- 5.4 The Procurement and Commercial team will support the development of the tender and evaluation methodology to ensure that the selected solution aligns with technical and security standards and delivers against the LFC's business continuity and cyber resilience objectives. The procurement will also include appropriate contract terms, including provisions for service levels, data protection, system scalability, exit management, and a break clause. A full procurement

strategy will be developed and approved in advance of commencing the procurement exercise.

Communications comments

- 5.5 There are no communications implications.

6 Financial comments

- 6.1 The report seeks approval to procure a new data backup system to replace the current system which has been in use for many years and is now considered obsolete. The duration of the agreement is up to five (5) years, and is planned to commence from late 2025/26. All costs related to the renewed agreement will be solely funded by the LFC revenue budget. The amounts are set out in Part Two of this report.
- 6.2 The system has been operational for a number of years, since it is an ongoing requirement. Hence there is sufficient budget cover for the agreement renewal across all years.

7 Legal Comments

- 7.1 This report seeks authority to commit expenditure set out in Part 2 in order to procure ICT back up services and award a contract for up to 5 years.
- 7.2 Under section 327D of the Greater London Authority 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.
- 7.3 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"). In particular, 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 value of proposed contract tender, as set out in the Part 2, exceeds this threshold, therefore the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor is required in accordance with the aforementioned direction.
- 7.4 The report confirms an open and transparent tender process shall be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The contract award decision will also be delegated to the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commercial Services.
- 7.5 The new ICT backup solution will ensure the Brigade remains operationally efficient and effectively.

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