

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	22 JULY 2024
SUBJECT	ICT HARDWARE REPLACEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	LUKASZ WRONA, HEAD OF BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR SHEPHERD-DUBEY, LEAD MEMBER STRATEGIC ASSETS AND SUSTAINABILITY
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) has a planned client device replacement programme which seeks to renew end user devices that are at the end of their expected reliable life.
- 1.2 As part of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) approved by the Fire Authority on 15 February 2024 (minute reference 46), a provision of £552,900 was shown to cover necessary investment in ICT hardware as well as services required to deliver transformational projects, including deployment system and systems cloud migration. In order to spend against this provision, the Authority’s governance arrangements require a paper to Management Committee to set out the rationale for the expenditure.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Management Committee:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the expenditure of £360,900 on end-user equipment listed in this report.
- 2.2 **APPROVE** the expenditure of 192,000 on services required to deliver improvements to deployment system and migration of systems to the cloud.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The following equipment is due replacement:

- Staff Laptops.
 - Fixed desktops PCs predominantly station based.
 - Docking stations to ensure compatibility with the new laptops, including both office based and home workers.
 - Mobile phone replacement – in line with replacement cycle.
- 3.2 RBFRS ICT strategy included simplification and collaboration pillars intended to standardise the IT estate and improve the use of collaborative tools, resulting in an increased efficiency.
- 3.3 RBFRS Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF), reviewed and approved by the Authority in February 2024, outlines equipment replacement plans appropriate to the type of device and its use. This request fully complies with these replacement plans.
- 3.4 The predominant use of laptop computers continues to be deemed appropriate within RBFRS, underpinning the Service's flexible working arrangements vital to attracting its diverse workforce, as well as its business continuity arrangements.
- 3.5 The service Mobile Phone purchasing strategy continues to be set around the Android operating system. Purchasing a specification suitable for the next 2 years use ensures affordability whilst maintaining a consistent level of functionality suitable for integrated mobile working.
- 3.6 The standardisation of good quality affordable equipment paired with continual adoption of collaborative tools significantly improved confidence of end-users in reliability and utility of equipment leading to a marked change in behaviours and attitudes towards new technologies.
- 3.7 As part of mitigating risks posed by ageing server hardware, and in support of the sustainability and scalability requirements of the Authority, the Cloud Migration project seeks to align RBFRS systems with the Home Office cloud-first strategy leveraging cloud computing for hosting service systems.
- 3.8 This project will see a transition away from localised server hardware towards cloud-hosting of RBFRS systems, new IT disaster recovery and business continuity arrangements being implemented leveraging tiered data centres, as well as a shift away from large periodic capital expenditure on server hardware and maintenance towards operational spend, already discussed and approved by The Authority in relevant budgets and incorporated in the medium to long term budgetary planning.
- 3.9 New laptop deployment system will provide the service with an ability to deploy and configure laptops minimising a need for handling them at RBFRS HQ. This will streamline the process, improve the efficiency within the ICT team, as well as provide an improved way of managing and

resolving issues with laptop equipment while physically away from the Service Desk.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Response: We will ensure that our people are trained, and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.2 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.3 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The spending falls within the envelope already allocated to hardware refresh, deployment system, and cloud migration by the Fire Authority.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The procurement will be undertaken in line with the Authority's contract regulations; and, dependent on timing, the Procurement Act 2023 which replaces the regime established by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The transparency requirements within the legislation will require the Authority to publish the subject matter of the proposed contract(s) and the estimated value(s) as part of the procurement exercise.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None specifically identified.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 If we do not maintain our end-user equipment there will be an increased risk of disruption to operations and adversely impacting service's ability to maintain its effectiveness in dealing with incidents, caused by potential inability to access relevant information.
- 8.2 Disrupting operations can have a negative impact on users' confidence in technology and adversely impact Service's ability to increase the use of technology in order to improve productivity.
- 8.3 If we do not improve the deployment system for our laptop equipment, the efficiency opportunities will be missed which will have a negative effect on the growing demand for our ICT department.
- 8.4 If we do not migrate our systems away from ageing hardware, their reliability cannot be guaranteed which can have a significant impact on all operations of RBFRS.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 Appropriately working ICT equipment is a necessary enabler to effective communication with partner organisations. Collaboration on common functions is always considered as part of any replacement device or function.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, Lead Member Strategic Assets and Sustainability

10.2 Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive Officer

10.3 Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer

10.4 Connor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Strategic Asset Investment Programme (SAIF).

11.2 ICT Strategy.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 None.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Lee Arslett ICT Service Delivery Manager arslettl@rbfrs.co.uk