

Report – Digital Services Committee

Future Network Programme – Gateway 4b

To be presented on 25th April 2024

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY

This report sets out the requirement to replace the existing City of London Corporation and City of London Police IT network.

In line with the City Corporation's Projects Procedure, your Digital Services Committee recommends under urgency procedures, the progression of the procurement of a New Network Support Provider to replace the existing network with a Secure Access Service Edge solution, at Gateway 4b, noting that the overall scheme would require additional funding requests through the budget-setting process for 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Court of Common Council approve the progression of the procurement of a New Network Support Provider to replace the existing network with a Secure Access Service Edge solution at Gateway 4b, noting the total estimated cost of the project at £9.24m, with an estimated Costed Risk Provision of £2.93m.

MAIN REPORT

Background

1. The current City of London Corporation and City of London Police network was implemented in 2017. The network hardware is ageing, and the requirements of the organisation have evolved to a point where there is no longer a cohesive approach to networking across the organisation. The Future Police Estates Programme (FPEP) and Markets Consolidation Programme (MCP) require a resilient and robust network provision to support the delivery of modern, future-proofed facilities. The current network contract with ROC Technologies expires in January 2025 at the latest and cannot be extended.
2. Accordingly, the Future Network Strategy was approved at your Digital Services Committee when it met on 17th January 2024. The Future Network Programme ('the Programme') aims to deliver the Strategy through replacing the existing network with a Secure Access Service Edge solution. This is likely to lead to improved performance, reduced hardware needs, decreased energy usage, and greater flexibility in building use across the organisation, delivering a modern and resilient network to the City of London Corporation and City of London Police.

Current Position

3. In line with the City Corporation's Projects Procedure, your Digital Services Committee (acting as Service Committee for the project) considered options under a Gateway 1-4, under urgency provisions. The options, and considerations, can be summarised as follows:

Option 1

To retain the existing the Multiprotocol Labelling Switch (MPLS) based network, continue to support the hardware, and replace it when it fails. This would fail to address the complexity and limitations of the existing network and would lead to inevitable disruption to connectivity when hardware fails. The existing network technology would be installed to all new buildings.

Option 2

To retain the existing MPLS based network and refresh the hardware based on the same technology before it becomes end of life. This would mean that the network remains supported but will not result in performance improvements or other associated benefits.

Option 3

To progress with the replacement of the existing network in line with the approved Future Network Strategy. This is likely to lead to improved performance, and the Wi-Fi-first approach will reduce hardware needs, decrease energy usage, and allow much greater flexibility in building use across the organisation.

Proposal

4. Option 3 was recommended, and approved, with the following Scope and Exclusions:
 - The successful replacement of the existing network hardware across 120 COL Buildings, 12 COLP buildings, 110 CCTV sites.
 - Move to a Wi-Fi-first network approach supported by the installation of new Wireless Access Points to provide improved coverage and connectivity.
 - The implementation of a new cloud-based networking and security architecture.
 - A modern, resilient network approach to support the delivery of new buildings through FPEP and MCP.
 - The procurement of a new Network Support Provider to support the delivery of the Future Network Strategy
5. The City Corporation Projects Procedures states that any project with a budget of over £5m, requires an approval by the Court of Common Council at Gateway 4b. The Honourable Court's approval is, therefore, being sought in support of Option 3, to replace the existing network with a Secure Access Service Edge solution in line with the approved Future Network Strategy.
6. If approved, the City Corporation would progress to Gateway 5 with the procurement of a New Network Support Provider at a cost of £535k, detailed below.

Item	Reason	Funds/ Source of Funding	Cost (£)
Programme Resource	To support the specification and preparation in advance of the procurement	City Fund / City Estate/CBF	£410k
External Procurement Support	To manage the procurement of the new Network Support Provider	City Fund / City Estate/CBF	£90k
Network Coverage Surveys	To support the specification preparation	City Fund / City Estate/CBF	£35k
Total			£535k

7. It should be noted that the City Bridge Foundation Board considered and agreed apportioned costs to the Charity at its meeting of 20 March 2024.
8. The cost to reach the next Gateway is to be funded from an existing budget of of £4.25m, captured within the approved 2024/25 budget as part of the Capital Bids. The total estimated cost of the project excluding risk is, however, £9.24m, with an estimated Costed Risk Provision of £2.93m (amounting, including risk, to a total of £12.17m). The Chamberlain has been consulted on the funding shortfall and it is confirmed that additional costs beyond the agreed £4.25m for the overall scheme would require additional funding requests through the budget setting process for 2025/26. Should these requests be unsuccessful, any spend would be from the approved £4.25m budget may become abortive costs.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. Strategic Implications – the network provision is essential to the work undertaken at the Guildhall and therefore underpins the delivery of a number of strategic outcomes.
10. Financial implications – detailed in paragraphs 6-8 and risk implications.
11. Resource implications – none identified.
12. Legal implications – none identified.
13. Risk implications – any delay in approval could cause significant delays to the programme, holding up the subsequent required stages of approval to issue an Invitation to Tender and the award of the new contract. With an estimated programme completion date of December 2024, there is a risk of the existing network becoming unsupported, specifically the wired and wireless connectivity that is provided at Guildhall and other sites. If there is no contract, there would be a higher risk if there were an incident with the network or if updates were required, as there would be no support mechanism in place. The current contract is due to expire in January 2025 with no further extensions allowed, and delays would mean that alternative arrangements would need to be made; these would likely increase running costs as well as holding

up the required service improvements.

Noting that the programme has an agreed budget of £4.25m, and an estimated cost of £12m, if the remaining budget is not identified there is a risk that spend to date would be considered abortive costs.

14. Climate implications – the recommended option will likely lead to a decrease in energy usage.
15. Security implications – none identified.

Conclusion

16. As the total estimated cost exceeds £5m, this Honourable Court is being asked to approve the progression of the procurement of a New Network Support Provider to replace the existing network with a Secure Access Service Edge solution.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 16th day of April 2024.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Dawn Wright
Chair, Digital Services Committee