



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Record of an Authority decision delegated to an Officer as required under Regulation 7 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014

Subject of decision	Proposal for a direct award to purchase Wide Area Network services (WAN) services from MLL Telecom (MLL) for a period of 5 years from November 2025 with an option to extend for a further 24 months in 12 month increments.
Officer name	George Marshall
Job title	Area Commander, Head of Protection
Date decision taken	11/11/2025
Reasons for the decision	Wide Area Network services (WAN) are required to connect our Local Area Networks (LAN) at 28 sites across the large geographical area of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The current architecture comprises an MPLS underlay with an SD-WAN overlay delivered via Fortinet hardware and customer-premises equipment (CPE). Retained sites operate with a single MPLS connection and an additional SD-WAN internet link, while whole-time sites have dual MPLS connections configured with Route Option 2 (RO2) and internet breakout capability. There is an essential business requirement to share data securely to staff between these sites. For example, our WAN enables centralised data management, facilitates operational and business communications, and supports business continuity by providing reliable connectivity for our geographically dispersed locations. The current contract expires in November 2025 and there is a significant cost of change, including: The circuits are already established and this process of connecting all sites has taken nearly two years, involving substantial coordination and resources, and considerable expense. Significant investment has already been made in the current hardware and extensive site connectivity configurations. Changing provider could result in existing hardware having to be replaced entirely. The cost of transitioning to a new solution would be considerable, factoring in implementation costs, project management costs, additional staffing, new hardware costs, and potential construction and installation charges, as well as further licensing costs.

For decisions regarding spend of £100,000 and above

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	Delivering and configuring new circuits would likely require another two years of work and may well include additional excessive construction charges from some suppliers.
Details of decision	MLL are named on the Telecommunication Services Procurement Framework. This is an emergency services procurement framework, which is a pre-vetted, legally compliant agreement that allows public sector bodies to simplify their procurement processes by removing the need for a full tender exercise. This ensures compliance with HWFRSs procurement procedures. <u>Scope of Services includes:</u> • Provision and maintenance of MPLS circuits and internet connectivity. • Co-managed SD-WAN configuration and associated Fortinet licensing. • Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with service credits for breaches. • Ongoing management and support services, including monitoring, incident resolution, and reporting. <u>Commercial Terms</u> • Fixed-price contract for five (5) years, covering circuits, SD-WAN licensing (annualized), and management costs. • Optional extension period of up to two (2) years at a pre-agreed fixed cost. • All costs for licensing, connectivity, and management services will be clearly itemized and remain consistent throughout the contract term and any extension. <u>Procurement Approach</u> The previous contract has expired, but continuity of service is essential to maintain network stability and operational resilience. A direct award under an approved public sector procurement framework is the most efficient route to secure these services without disruption, as the incumbent supplier (MLL Telecom) already provides the circuits and SD-WAN infrastructure. This approach ensures compliance with procurement regulations, delivers best value through continuity of service, and avoids unnecessary technical and operational risk associated with changing providers. A direct award contract, to MLL is recommended and this can be facilitated through a UK public sector buying organisation, such as Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO): Lot 1 Wide Area Network Services. The contract value for the 5 years £1,315,564.15 Year 1 £263,112.83

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	Year 2 £263,112.83 Year 3 £263,112.83 Year 4 £263,112.83 Year 5 £263,112.83
Details of alternative options considered and rejected (if any)	The transition to an alternative provider would incur substantial implementation and migration costs, which could exceed any short-term savings. As a result, the cost of procurement and disruption associated with changing suppliers and associated hardware and licensing would likely outweigh any potential benefits gained from retendering for an alternative solution, given the resourcing and financial implications involved. The circuits can be obtained from multiple suppliers, including from the Framework, however in addition to the cost of change the performance of the circuits, integration, lead time, requirement for additional equipment, speeds etc. are all potential issues, whereas this is in place / satisfactory for the current provider.
Any interests declared by a Member or Officer	None
Links to relevant background documents or information	Original specification document available from 2021, albeit this was for an initial tender. Other options available on the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation website. <u>Commercial Sensitivity</u> The information contained within this document is considered commercially sensitive. It includes details of network architecture, pricing structures, contractual terms, and service level arrangements that, if disclosed, could prejudice the commercial interests of our organization and the supplier. This information must therefore be treated as confidential and should not be shared outside the authorized procurement and governance process.

Signed.....  Date.....10/11/25.....

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