

Report to: **Partnership Board –Transport for the South East**

Date of meeting: **13 March 2023**

By: **Lead Officer, Transport for the South East**

Title of report: **Technical Call Off Contract**

Purpose of report: **To update the Board on the proposal to procure a technical call off contract.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of the Partnership Board are recommended to:

- (1) Note the reasons why a technical call off contract is required; and**
 - (2) Agree to delegate responsibility to lead and undertake the procurement exercise to the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chair.**
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1. Introduction

1.1 To date, when specialist advice or technical support has been required, TfSE has drafted a brief and undertaken a procurement exercise to secure a consultant (or consortium) to support the work.

1.2 With the increase in technical work now being undertaken by the team, it is sensible to review how work is being procured and identify if there is a way of streamlining the process. Not only for the resource of the team, but for the pressure on the procurement team within the accountable body.

1.3 The proposal therefore, is to procure a technical call off contract for a 2 year period, with a possible 1 year extension. This contract will cover a number of elements of our programme along with the ability to offer smaller pieces of ad-hoc technical support and resource when required. It will also mean certain pieces of work will be able to be commissioned very quickly without a need to carry out a procurement exercise each time.

1.4 The proposed contract would be worth approximately £4m over the next 2 years, with a possible additional £2m for a third year (subject to DfT funding).

1.5 Due to the specialist nature of the some of the work, it would not be appropriate for this contract to cover every single element of our work programme, so some of the more specialist elements would continue to be procured separately.

2 Background

2.1 TfSE has an ambitious and evolving programme of work to deliver in the next 2 years. The range and scale of work that we want to deliver is diverse and our technical teams will continue to require expert and technical support for external suppliers to

deliver it. The scale of the work programme and the difficulties in recruiting to the Transport Strategy Team mean that resource is stretched. In addition, there are some areas of the work programme where specialised expertise needs to be procured. This contract will provide a call off consultancy arrangement covering a wide range of support to TfSE to ensure delivery of our programme. This might include the transport strategy refresh, regional active travel strategy, analytical framework and centre of excellence.

2.2 This contract would also help to ease the pressure on the accountable body's procurement and sourcing solutions teams as we would not need to procure so many individual contracts. Due to the nature of our funding, this sometimes needs to occur at short notice, so this contract would offer us a good level of flexibility and enable us to deliver against our budget in a timely manner.

2.3 Appropriate measures will be put in place to manage this contract to ensure each piece of work is reviewed to consider whether it should be put through this contract or if another procurement route should be used.

2.4 Another STB, Transport East have just procured a similar contract and have shared their learning with the TfSE team to ensure we can produce a robust brief that covers the workstreams we require.

2.5 We are also working with the procurement team to put in place an appropriate assessment process for a contract of this scale including careful consideration of the balance between cost and quality and building an interview into the process.

2.6 As per the TfSE constitution (part 3, section 16, 16.1, e), TfSE will not delegate (to the Lead Officer) the function of awarding contracts in excess of the threshold for goods and services set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. (This is for any spend over £213,477). Therefore, it is recommended that the Lead Officer be given delegated responsibility to undertake the procurement exercise, and once it has concluded, the outcome will be presented to the Partnership Board to review and make the final decision.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Procurement of the contract will be undertaken within the rules and parameters set out by the procurement team at East Sussex County Council as the accountable body.

3.2 The outcome of the procurement exercise will be presented to the Partnership Board for review and decision. Due to timescales, an extra-ordinary virtual Partnership Board meeting may have to be arranged. The current proposal is to issue the Invitation to Tender in April 2023 and complete all tender evaluations and interviews in May 2023. The Board will then be presented with the outcome for a decision before the contract is awarded and a 10 day standstill period implemented.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Partnership Board is recommended to note the reasons why a technical call off contract is required. The Board are also asked to agree to delegate authority for the procurement of the contract to the Lead Officer, with an understanding that the outcome will be returned to the Board for a final decision before the contract is awarded.

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