South Downs
National Park Authority

Report to	**Resources & Performance Committee**
Date	**14 November 2012**
By	**Director of Planning**
Title of Report	**Tender for Geographical Information Systems and Services**
Purpose of Report	**To seek approval to undertake a tendering exercise leading to the appointment of one or more contractors to deliver GIS software and services to South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)**

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:
  1) Consider the approach to tendering for GIS software and services and authorise the commencement of the procurement.

1.   Introduction

1.1   The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) uses a considerable amount of map based information in the production of key documents such as the State of the National Park Report, the Local Plan and the Management Plan. This is also used extensively for strategic decision making and day to day procedures.

1.2   The existing Geographical Information System (GIS) contract with Hampshire County Council ends on the 31 March 2013. A replacement contract has to be put in place to continue this service in the long term.

1.3   Access to the GIS service is limited by the number of licences purchased. At present only five users can use the service at the same time. The data needs to be much more widely available and the solution to this is to have GIS available through the Intranet and Internet.

2.   Initial Findings

2.1   To prepare for a potential tendering exercise, the GIS Project Team carried out a number of lines of investigation. These included looking into the scope for possible collaboration with other National Parks, on the likely market response to a contract opportunity and what form this could most effectively take, and the introduction of GIS through Intranet or Internet.

2.2   Research with the other National Parks found that although they typically employed between 1 and 2 full time staff (or equivalent) on GIS there was no identified spare capacity and little scope for collaboration at this time. In the longer term collaboration between National Parks on GIS does make economic sense and therefore ideally the path that SDNPA should take is one that would make future collaboration possible.

2.3   A "Request for Information" was sent to a number of companies and organisations that supply either GIS services or software or both. The information returned revealed that few organisations would be able to provide for all of the GIS requirements and that putting out a single tender for this would restrict the market response. A much wider response could be expected from a GIS tender split into three lots. This would not disadvantage those companies able to provide the full service but would still allow more specialist organisations to bid for the work.

2.4   Intranet applications for GIS will allow a much wider use of the system without increasing the cost through multiple licences. This will also include an internet GIS enabling the

National Park to add maps to pages on its web site. The SDNPA can achieve internet and intranet GIS either by appointing a supplier to deploy the software through the tender process or by developing applications in-house using GIS software that is already available from NPA. This would require the recruitment of a specialist staff resource for a period of eighteen months. Rather than make a decision on the preferred route at this time, it is intended instead to include this as a lot within the tender so that a more informed "make or buy" decision can be made on receipt of a tender proposal.

3. Next Steps

3.1 A detailed specification will be drawn up for a tender document in three lots;

- Hosted High Function GIS
- Hosted Intranet and Internet GIS
- GI services (a person available three or four days a week – mostly at SDNPA offices)

3.2 It is expected that if the procurement process receives Resources and Policy Committee approval that tenders will be issued for return in February 2013.

3.3 The new contract would go live in May 2013 meaning that an extension to the contract with Hampshire County Council will be necessary. This is under discussion with the County Council.

4. Resources

4.1 The cost of the existing GIS arrangements, including licences, maintenance of nationally held datasets and GIS services is currently £75,000 per annum.

4.2 Indicative costs have been obtained through the market testing already carried out and from those it can be estimated that the new service could be delivered within the current budget. It is expected of course that both a detailed specification and the rigours of competition will have an effect on those prices.

4.3 Should SDNPA wish to join the other National Parks and develop the ANPA "common" intranet and internet GIS applications, for which there may be greater collaborative opportunities in the future, then there may be an additional cost for the staff resource to deliver that over a period of eighteen months.

5. Risk management

5.1 The current programme relies on an extension to the contract with Hampshire County Council and further delays would require additional extension periods to be negotiated. There is a risk that if extensions were not available then SDNPA would be left without any GIS resource. This is being mitigated by discussions with Hampshire County Council to extend the contract.

6. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

6.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

7.1 All National Park Authorities.

7.2 Market Investigations – five organisations responded.

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