

Report to	Policy & Resource Committee
Date	21 November 2017
By	Research and Evidence Officer (REO) / Performance and Projects Manager (PPM)
Title of Report	Tender for Geographical Information (GI) Services

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to

- 1) Approve the approach to the retender for GI services and authorise the commencement of the procurement.**
- 2) Agree that the approval of tender documentation and the decision to award the contract, following an open tendering process, is delegated to the Chief Executive**

1. Summary and Background

- 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 Partnership Management Plan. It is also used extensively for strategic decision making and day to day procedures.
- 1.2 The existing provision of GI services by South Coast GIS (SCGIS) ends on the 30 June 2018. SCGIS were contracted by the SDNPA to provide 0.6FTE starting on 1 July 2013 on a 3 year contract with an option to extend by a further two years, we opted for both of the additional years. Therefore, we now have to procure a new contract to continue this service.
- 1.3 The provision within the current service contract has been exceeded in each quarter since adoption, from 0.5 hours up to a maximum of 161 hours. However, this has often been because of the additional requirements from the development of the Local Plan. With adoption likely in late 2018 we expect to see some reduction in the requirements for GI services for this purpose. Resources to support this work have been allocated from the Local Plan budget.

2. Considerations for employment: in house vs shared services

- 2.1 We have considered the arguments for and against the engagement of a contractor compared to the employment of a permanent member of staff and recommend that we continue with a contracted arrangement. The primary reasons for this are:

Resilience: Contractors deliver a consistency of service by providing alternative staff during periods of sickness, annual or other leave.

Flexibility: During times of increased workload there is a facility to 'buy in' additional resource, this has been used extensively during the production of the local plan.

Depth of knowledge: By employing a company we have a much broader skill and knowledge set to draw from, rather than relying on an individual, which creates the risk of a single point of failure.
- 2.2 The strategic and organisational decision making regarding GI service is undertaken by the Research and Evidence Officer and Performance and Projects Manager.

3. Comparison to other National Park and considerations for shared services with other National Parks

- 3.1 In preparation for this tender process we carried out a brief questionnaire of other National Parks and their current services. The FTE of GIS officers ranged from as little as 0.5 up to a maximum of 2.0 at the Lake District, with an average of just above 1 FTE. Our core GIS operations including the management of software and data is roughly 1.4 (GIS Contract, 0.6, REO, 0.2, and Data Management Officer 0.6). Considering our size and the greater planning burden of the SDNP we run an efficient service.
- 3.2 The provision of GIS services would not benefit from a shared service approach for a number of reasons. Firstly, the complicated nature of the work means staff benefit hugely from face to face contact with contractors. Secondly, we would not see any cost savings as work undertaken under the service contract is done so by the hour and is unlikely to benefit from economies of scale. Finally, our mapping benefits from a degree of local knowledge which would be lost with a centralised GIS officer.

4. Procurement of GIS systems

- 4.1 It should be noted that the provision of GIS software to meet the day to day needs of SDNPA officers is not included within this procurement. This has for the last five years been provided under a separate contract by another supplier 'ThinkWhere Ltd' and will be the subject of separate review over the coming months. The value of this contract falls within the general delegation of authority to the Chief Executive, as per standing orders.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 A detailed specification will be drawn up for the GIS service tender document by January 2018
- 5.2 It is expected that if the procurement process receives P&R approval that tenders will be issued for return in February 2018.
- 5.3 The new contract would go live in June 2018 to ensure a sufficient handover time between contractors should it be required.

6. Contract monitoring

- 6.1 The Research and Evidence Officer and Performance and Projects Manager will hold quarterly contract meetings to assess performance against a series of key performance indicators, to date these have been;
- Proportion of jobs completed to agreed timescale
 - Proportion of jobs completed to a good or high standard
 - Average weekly consultancy hours

7. P&R Committee Considerations

- 7.1 The tendering of GIS services was last put forward to the Resource and Performance [Committee on 14 November 2012](#). The Committee approved "*a tendering exercise leading to the appointment of one or more contractors to deliver Geographical Information System software and services to the South Downs National Park Authority*"

8. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	<p>The current contract is £52,496 per annum. It is our expectation that any replacement contract will be of similar value. The contract will run for a period of up to 5 years with a total cost of £262,480. The budget for this has been allocated to the Performance and Projects core operating budget.</p> <p>We provide a desk space and computer for the contractor during their time in the office.</p> <p>The contractor is provided with a standalone machine to cope with the high levels of processing power required. We may need to replace this machine during the life of the contract.</p> <p>There is a small demand on the REO and PPM with regards to contact and contractor management</p>
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	An open tender procedure carried out under Public Procurement rules will ensure that SDNPA receives best value from the market.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	This is a professional services contract and the scope for applying social value is limited although we will look for companies to be engaging with their local community and ideally, employing trainees or apprentices or contributing to training by other means.
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Tender documents are checked to ensure they meet the requirements of the Equality Act with regard to either the specification or the selection and award criteria applied
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
<p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly 	None

9. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Contractor does not have skills necessary to fulfil the contract	1	3	Clearly state requirements and type of work required within tender. Check references and seek examples of previous work
Contracted company folds during the contracts period	1	3	We will ensure core staff maintain a minimal level of GIS ability to cover basic service function. In addition we will maintain relationships through GIS networks to buy in emergency cover should the situation require it.

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 Appendices None
 SDNPA Consultees Director of Countryside Policy and Management, Chief Executive; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services; Business Service Manager; ICT Strategy Manager
 External Consultees None
 Background Documents [GIS Strategy 2017-22](#)
[NP GIS questionnaire](#)