

Report to **Chief Executive Officer**  
Date **22 January 2025**  
By **Hayley Madgwick, Procurement Manager**  
Title of Report **Urgent Action Award of Contract for the former Singleton Railway Station: Consolidation repairs and safety measures to platforms and retaining wall.**

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**Recommendation:**

**The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, is recommended to authorise the following Urgent Action in line with the Urgent Action provision as set out in Standing Order 18 of the Authority's Standing Orders:**

- I. Approve the award of a contract to undertake consolidation repairs to the former Singleton Railway Station as set out in this report.**
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**I. Introduction and background**

- I.1** Centurion Way is an identified priority scheme in the SDNPA Corporate Plan 2020-25, and Delivery Action AN2 within the SDNPA Cycling and Walking Strategy. It is also included as a key scheme in the West Sussex County Council Walking and Cycling Strategy and Sustrans National Cycle Network 20-Year Strategy. The path provides safe, sustainable access for visitors and the local community.
- I.2** When complete, this phase of the Centurion Way will connect with the South Downs Way National Trail at Cocking in the heart of the National Park, extending approximately 14-15 km from Chichester. It will require the continued support of major landowners – The Edward James Foundation (West Dean Estate), National Trust and Cowdray Estate. There is an aspiration to extend the route to Midhurst long-term, linking to wider potential networks within the National Park.
- I.3** This report seeks the award of the contract for works to consolidate and repair heritage infrastructure at the former Singleton Railway Station (disused), which is required to facilitate the ongoing construction of Centurion Way and the opening of the southern section in May 2025.
- I.4** The work includes repairing two of the three platforms and consolidating the retaining wall on the approach access to the Station Site and Centurion Way. The works required both Planning Approval and Listed Building Consent, which was applied for and granted in late 2024.
- I.5** The specifications for the work were developed by the project's heritage architect consultants, ensuring that all bidders had a clear understanding of the requirements. This approach also ensured that the selected bidder's qualifications and experience aligned closely with the project's needs.
- I.6** The specification for the works had been determined by heritage architect consultants Vallis & Hall who provided an outline assessment of the potential cost. They advised that due to the work's nature and uniqueness, determining an accurate cost estimate was difficult and would be confirmed in the tender process. The working cost estimate for the work was initially considered to be in the region of £150,000, and a competitive procurement process

was undertaken. After evaluating the returned bids, a preferred bidder was identified with a best price of £220,000.

- 1.7 The funding for this contract, including the additional £70,000, is coming in entirety from the contingency funding, which is 25% of the total project cost estimate £3,182,269.38. There is funding to complete up to Section 7 of the route, which covers all construction plans including the station repairs through to the end of 2025 and into 2026. Additional funding will be needed for construction activities extending into 2026.
- 1.8 The work is scheduled to be completed by May 2025 to meet the planned opening date. The earliest necessary works can commence is the end of February 2025, with the 7-day notice period, award of contracts, and contractor mobilisation taking place in the intervening period.
- 1.9 It is proposed that Urgent Action be taken by the Chief Executive to award this contract. Given the purpose of the works is to conserve a heritage asset and avoid delays in opening the route it is considered there is insufficient time to convene a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee (within whose remit the proposed contract award falls) to consider this award. Delaying the awarding of the contract and implementation of the works would impact the planned opening and further development of Centurion Way. It is therefore recommended that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, authorise the award of the contract as set out in this report under the Urgent Action power as set out at Standing Order 18 of the Authority's Standing Orders which is considered to be in accordance with policy and the best interests of the Authority and the National Park.

## **2. The Procurement Route**

- 2.1 The expected contract value of £220,000 for these repair works falls significantly below the threshold set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for works contracts. The threshold applying from 1 January 2024 is £5,372,609 (including VAT). The Regulations, other than Chapter 8, will not therefore apply to this procurement process.
- 2.2 Contract Standing Orders (CSO 10) applies to contracts above £75,000 but less than the relevant GPA threshold (incorporated into UK law) and states that tenders should be invited from at least five companies. This procurement has used the Open Process and the contract was advertised on our own website and nationally using the Contract Finder public procurement portal.
- 2.3 According to the Authority's Standing Orders and Contract Standing Orders, where a proposed contract is of a value greater than £200,000 but less than £1 million, and before inviting expressions of interest from bidders, a decision authorising the commencement of the procurement process from the Policy and Resources Committee shall be obtained.

## **3. Tender Evaluation**

- 3.1 Eight bidders submitted a tender response. The evaluation of the tenders was carried out in two stages.
- 3.2 The capability of the contractor to satisfactorily carry out the contract is evaluated through the Selection Stage. This involved looking at the financial strength and other resources of the company, including its previous experience in carrying out similar works. There was no weighting or scoring in this stage of the open tender; the contractors could either do the work or they could not, so this was judged on a pass or fail basis. As the selection criteria is described in the tender, it is unusual for companies to fail at this stage, generally if they do not meet the criteria then they will not submit a bid.
- 3.3 The Award Stage was carried out using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) criteria for awarding the contract, using a combination of quality factors, such as Approach to the Contract, Project Resourcing as well as price. The evaluation panel looked at the sustainability aspects of any approach as well as looking for proposals that added social value to the contract.

3.4 Evaluation was carried out by a number of officers scoring independently, before meeting on a panel basis. The evaluation programme also allowed for a process of clarification on all aspects of bids and due diligence.

#### 4. Options & cost implications

4.1 Cost Overrun. The preferred bid is significantly higher than the initial estimate of £150k, raising concerns about budget overruns. However, the level of works set out in the tender are considered necessary in order to ensure the conservation of the site to the appropriate standard.

4.2 Funding and Budget Implications. The increased cost of £220k will have the following impact on the project budget The project contingency was set at 25% (£795,567.35). To date including the 220k we have spent or allocated £445,944.

4.3 Timeframe. As the contract award was originally expected to be able to be approved under delegated authority there would have been no impact on the planned opening of the route. However, convening a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee or taking approval of the award to the next meeting of the committee on 20 February 2025 would delay the start of the works and delay the opening of the route. Delays to this work being completed will have negative implications in terms of stakeholder relationships as the period for the opening of this section has already been communicated to them and a further delay will affect SDNPA's credibility to deliver infrastructure projects. Maintaining good stakeholder relationships is integral to the success of the project.

4.4 It is therefore recommended that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority and after considering required specialist and legal advice, authorise the award of the contract as set out in this report under the Urgent Action power as set out at Standing Order 18 of the Authority's Standing Orders.

#### 5. Next steps

5.1 If the recommendation is approved, the Procurement Team will issue a contract award letter and arrange for a Contract document to be signed and sealed. The works are planned to commence by the end of February 2025.

#### 6. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No, but any decision made in respect of this report will be given as an update to the next Authority meeting.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes. The project contingency was set at 25% (£795,567.35). To date including the 220k we have spent or allocated £445,944.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The competitive tender process is aimed at delivering value for money.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	Outcome 5 Outstanding experiences for communities and visitors are supported by high quality access and sustainable transport networks;  5.2 Improve accessibility through a network of high-quality routes connecting communities with the landscape, heritage, attractions and transport hubs and gateways  5.3 Encourage sustainable access into and around the National Park, encouraging the retention and expansion of rural transport services
Links to other projects or	Centurion Way Phase 2

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
partner organisations	West Dean Estate
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives?	Centurion Way is identified in the Authority's Climate Change Action Plan, Programme: Transport and Sustainable Access. The creation of off- road active travel infrastructure such as the Centurion Way supports the shift to low carbon travel.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	The contract will be below the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) threshold for Works contracts (£5,336,937) and therefore the Social Value Act will not apply. However we will endeavour to follow the principles where proportionate to the contract.
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. Consideration has been given to improve access onto and around the site. Additional equalities impacts were taken into account when the decision to undertake the project.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	Nonspecific to the works. There is an inherent risk associated with potential anti-social behaviour on this type of all access rural multiuser path.
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	The health and safety risks during construction for the construction workers will be mitigated under the terms of the conditional construction phase plan. As with the procurement of any works contract, bidders are subject to selection criteria checks which include an examination of Health and Safety policies and records. Insurance policies including public liability insurance are required to be held by the successful bidder, and certificates checked before the contract is awarded.  The contractor will also be required to produce an up to date health and safety risk assessment and plan before work commences and to keep it up to date for the duration of the contract.
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No.

## **7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Commercial Risk:</b> that either the price objectives are not achieved up front, or there are other costs that arise during the contract that diminish the overall benefits.	Possible	3	A thorough tendering process with a detailed specification keeps the risk of hidden costs to a minimum, however with a complex site such as this there is the potential for further costs to arise, as the contract is carried out.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<p><b>Performance Risk:</b> This concerns the ability of supplier to perform consistently over the life of the contract to deliver the planned benefits.</p>	Unlikely	4	The contract will be undertaken using the JCT Contract document which makes provision for delay and incentive payments. The contract will be closely managed by and SDNPA construction project manager supported by the projects heritage architect consultants who will liaise with the contractor following tender award regarding information, progress and project issues.
<p><b>Contractual Risk:</b> This covers things like being able to remedy the shortcomings in the contractors' performance without severely damaging the contract, and about avoiding reliance on the contracted supplier as the contract develops.</p>	Unlikely	3	There is a reliance on the contractor in any construction process and it is important to ensure intelligent and active contract management. This project will have a dedicated project manager supported by projects heritage architect consultants. The JCT contract is designed to protect both the client and contractor and makes provision for delay damages, inspection, maintenance etc which mitigates this risk.
<p><b>Legal Risk:</b> In Public Procurement there is a legal risk, where a procurement is found unsound in law, either through the remedies directive or the public procurement rules.</p>	Rare	2	The value of this contract is below the threshold for Public Contract Regulations, although they are followed as best practice. The use of professional procurement staff has helped to ensure that the contract process complies with the SDNPA procurement rules and with best practice.

## **HAYLEY MADGWICK**

### **Procurement Manager**

#### **South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices Contract Award Recommendation Report

SDNPA Consultees Director of Landscape and Strategy; Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer.

External Consultees None

Background Documents [P&R Committee 20 June 2024, Agenda Item 15, Centurion Way Contract Procurement](#)