

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	22 January 2013
Title:	Geotechnical Services Framework 2013-2017
Reference:	4486
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to procure a framework for geotechnical and geoenvironmental services for site investigation works to sites in and around Hampshire. Access to the framework is requested by East Sussex County Council for procurement of their site investigation requirements.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1 The Council uses a current framework arrangement for supply of geotechnical services and site investigation works that expires on 31 March 2013. Nine service suppliers are included in the framework and carry out instructions that range from small soil investigation studies to larger site analysis and desk top studies. In addition, the suppliers are required to provide technical reports giving recommendations upon site contamination issues and ground bearing capacity analysis.
- 2.2 The value of work ordered through the existing framework varies according to demand, but has historically been approximately £350,000 per annum.
- 2.3 There will be a future need for geotechnical and geoenvironmental services because site investigation is an integral part of the information gathered for design of any construction project.

3. Key Issues

3.1 Geotechnical services are required at an early stage of a project in order to establish ground conditions and other geological parameters at a particular site location. Information gained during a site survey is analysed to produce a report used by designers in developing foundations to highways, structures

and building projects. This information is a critical part of design and has a significant effect on design choices and solutions.

- 3.2 Geotechnical services encompass site topography, bearing capacity and the like by using established investigation methods. Depending upon the nature of the project, boreholes are drilled, samples taken and laboratory tests undertaken. This requires specialist resources to be used on an occasional basis as projects are designed and developed. Provision of such services are most effectively provided by sourcing through a number of specialist suppliers who have the capacity and technical expertise to meet these specific demands.
- 3.3 The proposed arrangement is to establish a framework with up to 10 suppliers capable of providing all or part of the services detailed in the specification documents. Each supplier will be required to price a detailed list of services directly related to these specifications. A selection procedure contained in the framework contract will determine which supplier is awarded particular work packages or services.
- 3.4 It is estimated that the total value of services placed through the framework may amount to approximately £500,000 per annum, but this is dependent upon service demand and workload requirements. There is no commitment to place a minimal value of services through the framework and the Council does not have a liability for future values.
- 3.5 As part of the Sold Service initiative, enquiries have been made with adjacent authorities to see if they would like to join in the procurement process. Most authorities already have arrangements through other contracts in place for geotechnical services but one – East Sussex County Council has asked to be included with the European Journal notice and have a separate section in the pricing documents for use by them.
- 3.6 Any arrangement with another authority would not incur liability to the suppliers from the Council. Geotechnical services will be ‘called off’ by each authority and any contractual arrangement will be between the supplier and that authority. It is however expected that inclusion of another authority will make the framework more attractive to suppliers making prices very competitive thereby benefitting both authorities.
- 3.7 Expressions of interest are currently being sought through the European Journal with the intention of issuing tenders in late January for return in late February 2013. The suppliers will be assessed against pre-defined criteria of quality and price, with the successful suppliers being notified in March 2013. The framework is expected to be operational and ready for use in April 2013.

4. Outline of Options

4.1 Option 1

'In house' delivery of geotechnical site investigation services:

The Council could choose to develop an 'in house' section to undertake site investigation studies and reports. This would require significant resources and expertise to carry out site operations and analysis results. The number of sites requiring investigation and level of tests varies according to project demand and this could not guarantee a sustainable amount of work for an 'in house' section. Engagement with a number of selected geotechnical specialists allows the Council to obtain resources at short notice without any guarantee or commitment of future workload. This option has therefore been rejected.

4.2 Option 2

Single source supplier:

The extent and requirements involved with a particular study varies according to the geology of the site and its intended use. Some suppliers have a particular area of expertise or have specialist equipment available. It is doubtful that one supplier could deliver all of the wide range of services without recourse to sub-contracting and consequential additional costs. The framework is intended to provide a flexible resource to the Council with suppliers at source and this option has therefore been rejected

4.3 Option 3

Framework with up to 10 suppliers:

Each supplier will offer some or all of a range of services that will be pre-defined within the tender documents. Selection of a particular commission will be determined by the selection procedure contained in the documents and these will be according to price, suitability for the work and availability of resources.

This framework is recommended because it provides the ability to select flexible and economic resources without imposing a degree of liability for values ordered through the contract. The new framework will build upon experienced gained from the existing one – which has already been very successful in obtaining resources for competitive prices at short notice.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Of the three options considered, option 3 provided by the framework is the most suitable form of engagement for geotechnical services. It provides a flexible resource but ensures that suppliers meet standards required by the specification documents for delivery of the service and ensures competition from suppliers.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That approval be given to procure a framework (option 3), to facilitate supply of geotechnical and geoenvironmental services for site investigation works to sites in and around Hampshire for the period 2013-17, with an estimated value of £3 million in total, of which £2 million relates to Hampshire County Council and £1 million to East Sussex County Council.
- 6.2 That approval be given to work with East Sussex County Council during the tender process and allow access by that Council to the geotechnical framework.
- 6.3 That the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to agree any variations in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. An assessment of the impacts in this service area can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-impact-assessments/cx-pu-eqimpact-envi.htm>

It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. The decision will have no impact upon crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Effective geological assessments and geoenvironmental reports allow efficient design solutions to be provided, and therefore minimise the opportunity for over design.

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Effective geological assessment and geoenvironmental reports allow an understanding of the underlying strata upon which projects are constructed. Efficient design can allow adaptation of projects for subsequent alternative uses where applicable.