

CABINET MEETING –8 June 2023 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Ground Investigation Works and Geotechnical Services Framework

Author(s):

Executive Director of City Development

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of the report is to seek approval to procure and award a new framework for ground investigation works and geotechnical services.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) approve the procurement and award of a new framework agreement for ground investigation works and geotechnical services; and
- (ii) authorise the Executive Director of City Development in consultation with the Dynamic City Portfolio Holder and the Director of Finance to conclude the contractual arrangements.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? ***Yes**

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

The Council has an ongoing requirement for Ground Investigation works on Council led schemes. A framework arrangement, with a number of suitable, pre-qualified providers, allows the Council to source services expeditiously at the lowest price and/or the most advantageous offer without undertaking a separate tendering exercise in each instance. The framework arrangement will enable the Council to monitor provider performance, quality and service delivery during the term of the framework.

Alternative Options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

The following options were considered and rejected.

Do nothing - This is rejected as it will add to timescales and increased cost through procuring separately on a scheme-by-scheme basis.

Utilise an existing framework – A similar framework is currently in use by Durham County Council - Framework for Provision of Civil and Geotechnical Engineering Investigation and Material Testing, this could be used by Sunderland. This option was discounted due to the short period of time length left on the framework.

Impacts analysed;

Equality ☐ Y Privacy ☐ Sustainability ☐ Y Crime and Disorder ☐

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

**GROUND INVESTIGATION WORKS AND GEOTECHNICAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK
REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval to procure and establish a new framework for ground investigation works and geotechnical services.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) approve the procurement and award of a new framework agreement for ground investigation works and geotechnical services; and
- (ii) authorise the Executive Director of City Development in consultation with the Dynamic City Portfolio Holder and the Director of Finance to conclude the contractual arrangements.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Ground investigations are a means of determining the condition of the ground, ideally before beginning construction works. They focus specifically on intrusive geotechnical work such as trial pits and boreholes, and so differ from wider 'site investigations' which tend to involve the collation of more general information from the client, desk studies, walkover surveys, and so on.
- 3.2 The level of detail and quality of information available concerning ground conditions informs the development and design of a scheme and identifies issues that may be encountered during the construction phase such as the presence of faults, underground obstructions, groundwater etc. Effective ground investigations lead to better scheme costs estimates.
- 3.3 Ground investigations can help determine:
- Water table level and water flow.
 - The nature of faults, fissures and voids in the underground.
 - Ground layer thicknesses and the mechanical properties of soil.
 - Detailed information about soil and ground samples.
- 3.4 A number of Council-led schemes have recently required comprehensive Ground Investigation works, such as the new Wear footbridge, SSTC 3, and the Doxford Park/Ryhope Link Road scheme. The footbridge in particular required extensive ground investigation work to be carried out due to the challenging ground conditions in that area.
- 3.5 A new framework arrangement, with a number of suitable providers, will allow the Council to continue to source services expeditiously at the lowest price and/or the most economically advantageous offer and enable the Council to place orders for services without undertaking a tendering exercise in each instance.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The Council's existing framework for ground investigations was established in 2019, with five suppliers appointed. This framework has since been used 109 times across all Council Departments. This framework will come to an end in September 2023.
- 4.2 As there is an ongoing requirement for ground investigation works, it is necessary to put in place a new framework arrangement via a competitive procurement process.

5. Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 The Council has an ongoing requirement for Ground Investigation works on Council led schemes. A framework arrangement, with a number of suitable, pre-qualified providers, allows the Council to source services expeditiously at the lowest price and/or the most advantageous offer without undertaking a separate tendering exercise in each instance. The framework arrangement will enable the Council to monitor provider performance, quality and service delivery during the term of the framework.

6. Alternative Options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

- 6.1 The following options were considered and rejected.
 - 6.1.1 Do nothing - This is rejected as it will add to timescales and increased cost through procuring separately on a scheme-by-scheme basis.
 - 6.1.2 Utilise an existing framework – A similar framework is currently in use by Durham County Council - Framework for Provision of Civil and Geotechnical Engineering Investigation and Material Testing, this could be used by Sunderland. This option was discounted due to the short period of time length left on the framework.

7. Impact Analysis

Introduction

The impact on communities of interest in relation to equality, privacy, sustainability and crime and disorder issues have been considered and impacts identified below.

(a) Equalities –

An initial Equality Relevance Assessment has taken place and this particular proposal was classed as 'Low Relevance' in terms of equality duty.

Appropriate equality questions will be included in the assessment as part of the Selection Questionnaire for tenderers to join the framework.

(b) Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) –

A PIA was not deemed necessary for this procurement as personal data pertaining to tenderers will be treated in accordance with the Council's data protection policy, and no further personal data is anticipated to be collected

(c) Sustainability –

The Impact Filter has identified this contract as having **less significant** sustainability impacts.

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (a) Financial Implications –** There are no additional external costs of establishing the framework. The costs of any ground investigations to be undertaken will be funded from approved resources allocated to specific schemes at the appropriate time.
- (b) Legal Implications –** The procurement process for the proposed new framework agreement will be carried out in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.
- (c) Implications for Other Services –** It is anticipated that the implementation of a framework would be beneficial to other services within the Council who will have access to the new framework agreement.
- (d) Procurement –** Corporate Procurement has considered all potential routes to market including the potential use of the existing Durham Council Framework for Civil and Geotechnical Engineering Laboratory Services. However, that framework agreement is due to expire shortly so there is a need for the Council to procure its own new framework agreement for these services.

9. List of Appendices

Sustainability Impact Assessment

