

BUSINESS GROWTH BOARD

23rd OCTOBER 2019

NEUTRAL VENDOR FRAMEWORK ACCEPTANCE

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to join the national “Specialist Professional Services (NEPRO³)” neutral vendor framework for the provision of Specialist expertise.

Thematic Priority

Ensure new businesses receive the support they need to flourish

Freedom of Information and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme

Recommendations

The Board is asked to endorse

- The progression of Neutral Vendor Framework acceptance to the MCA for a decision to sign up to the national “Specialist Professional Services (NEPRO³)” neutral vendor Framework for the use of contracting with specialist provision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** In 2015 Sheffield City Region joined the National NEPRO Neutral Vendor framework which provides access to a range of specialists as and when they may be required. The framework has been accessed and used predominantly by the SCR Growth Hub and the Inward Investment functions. Business Growth Specialists, Sector Advisors and SCR required intelligence is currently provided through this neutral vendor system, to enable a breadth of experience to be provided for a range of projects with differing financial requirements and time periods, without the requirement of employing staff members on a full or part time basis.
- 1.2** The current framework term comes to an end on the 30th of November and there is a requirement for an ongoing neutral vendor framework to be available to the SCR to access specialist support.

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1** In June 2019 a full OJEU procurement exercise was initiated to test the market for a Neutral Vendor to provide these services to the SCR for a 4-year term based on a contract initially of 2 years with a 2-year opportunity to extend based on confirmation of budgets and appropriateness of service. Through this formally managed process no suitable provision was identified.

- 2.2** The national “Specialist Professional Services (NEPRO³)” Framework was identified as the framework most suited to accommodate the SCR’s requirements.
- 2.3** As a result, in co-operation with internal procurement, contracting and delivery teams several existing national frameworks were identified, including the new iteration of the existing NEPRO framework provision.
- 2.4** The Framework has been procured by the Association of North East Councils Limited (trading as the North East Procurement Organisation / NEPO), who have appointed Bloom Procurement Services Limited as the delivery partner for specialist professional services via a single supplier Framework Agreement commencing on 1st September 2019 for a period of four (4) years (with extension options)

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1** A full OJEU procurement was undertaken to test the market for other suitable provision outside of the existing framework and assess the provision that exists for the delivery of such services. This process did not identify any provision that would accommodate the Sheffield City Region’s requirements. A decision to retender was discounted because of cost and time.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

The cost associated with this approval are fully funded through the Growth Hub budget, Skills Bank and DIT KAM project. This funding has already been accounted for within the budgets.

Call-off work from the framework is made by competition on a per project basis as necessary for appraisal.

4.2 Legal

The procurement exercise has been undertaken in line with standard practice and there will be a separate work order (call-off contract) with Bloom Procurement Services Limited for each supplier and project awarded under the framework. The approval requested today is a result of the potential for the framework appointments to exceed £100k.

4.3 Risk Management

The framework has been established to ensure that there is capacity and a broad range of expertise available to meet the peak requirements of support when required.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

No requirements associated with the recommendations of this paper.

5. Communications

- 5.1** The award of contracts is communicated on the MCA published Contracts Register in accordance with the MCA transparency requirements.

6. Appendices/Annexes

- 6.1** N/A

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: