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Award

National Police Air Service Extension of the existing Air to Ground Communications Support Contract

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-001956

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-042e99

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Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Wellington House, 40-50 Wellington Street

Leeds

LS1 2DE

Contact

Roy Towler

Email

roy.towler@bluelight.police.uk

Telephone

+44 7929726422

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/>

Buyer's address

<https://bluelightcommercial.police.uk/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Regional or local authority

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

National Police Air Service Extension of the existing Air to Ground Communications Support Contract

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 50210000 - Repair, maintenance and associated services related to aircraft and other equipment

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The support, service and maintenance of Tetra Air to Ground radio devices and equipment for the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and Police Scotland.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £2,044,325

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 50333000 - Maintenance services of radio-communications equipment

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The support, service and maintenance of Tetra Air to Ground radio devices and equipment for the National Police Air Service (NPAS) and Police Scotland.

The existing contract was established in 2020 with a core three year service provision from 2021 to 2023. 2024 and 2025 represent two year extension options which were included in the contract and the published 2020 VEAT. Key, proprietary components to the radio equipment which are becoming obsolete are also to be supplied under a 'last time buy' production and supply

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Negotiated without a prior call for competition

- The works, supplies or services can be provided only by a particular economic operator for the following reason:
 - absence of competition for technical reasons

Explanation:

The National Police Air Service (NPAS) delivers a fully borderless air service to all police forces in England and Wales 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and a national response to major and critical incidents. NPAS is committed to providing a high-quality policing aviation service which provides value for money.

In December 2020, a VEAT notice (ref 589620-2020) was published in relation to the support, service and maintenance of Tetra Air to Ground radio devices and equipment for NPAS, the Met Police Service and Police Scotland.

The contract period was for three years with an option to extend for a further two years: the extensions would 'be dependent on the status of the Emergency Services Network ('ESN') programme and associated Aircraft Communication System programme currently being implemented by the UK Home Office'.

The VEAT elaborated further on the duration of the agreement by clarifying that the 'The Police and Crime Commissioner has therefore sought to put in place a contract for a term to align to the delivery of the ESN with optional extensions available to deal with any potential delays to the delivery of ESN'.

The Emergency Services Network is still not live operationally in the UK, with the current Airwave (Tetra) network (live since circa 2000) still in operation for all police communications.

The current target for the switch off of the Airwave network and the full transition to the ESN network is 2029. Whilst a rollout of ESN will commence before this date, no detail of which Police forces and their switchover date (including NPAS) has been published by the Home Office.

The 2020 VEAT identified that the 'bespoke equipment and operating system used by the

National Police Air Service, the Metropolitan Police Force and Police Scotland ('Customers') for the Tetra Air to Ground Radio Devices ("System") in some of their aircraft is proprietary to Chelton Limited' and that 'the equipment forming part of the System is now obsolete and CAS [Chelton] are the only supplier holding spare parts for any required maintenance and repair works. Consequently, [Chelton] are the only supplier capable of providing the required ongoing support and maintenance for the System together with any necessary upgrades and modifications required to ensure that the System continues to meet the critical operational and business needs.'

This situation remains the same in 2024: no supplier, other than Chelton Limited, nor any alternate equipment can interface with the Airwave network in relation to Air to Ground communication.

The only alternate to the Chelton Tetra Airwaves equipment/service will be the arrival of the ESN, which is still several years from its rollout commencement.

It should also be noted that Chelton is the appointed supplier that will deliver radio equipment for Air to Ground communications under the future ESN programme.

Without the appointment of the services of Chelton, or the acquisition of the obsolete key components, then neither NPAS nor Police Scotland will have a sustainable Air to Ground communications link or network.

This will impact the ability to support policing operations on the ground and presents a credible risk of danger to life for the public and police officers alike, and also a reduction in crime prevention and detection.

The support, service and maintenance of Tetra Air to Ground radio devices and equipment is still required for NPAS and Police Scotland. The existing contract was established in 2020 with a core three year service provision from 2021 to 2023 with a further 2 year extension option.

The 2020 VEAT outlined the 5 year period at an overall value of £3.5M. A secondary VEAT is being published for the same contract because the £3.5M value will now be exceeded.

The cumulative service cost from 2021 to 2025 and the purchase of essential components which are now obsolete, exceeds the £3.5M by £2,044,325.05

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

Section V. Award of contract/concession

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract/concession

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

19 January 2024

V.2.2) Information about tenders

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor/concessionaire

Chelton Ltd

Marlow

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

Companies House

00896823

The contractor/concessionaire is an SME

No

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot/concession (excluding VAT)

Total value of the contract/lot/concession: £2,044,325

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

The High Court of England and Wales

7 Rools Buildings, Fetter Lane

London

EC4A 1NL

Country

United Kingdom