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Award

Air Navigation Services Provider Services and Airspace Change Process for National Police Air Service UAS Trials

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-006829

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-044520

Published 4 March 2024, 12:33pm

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

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

Air Navigation Services Provider Services and Airspace Change Process for National Police Air Service UAS Trials

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 63732000 - Air-traffic control services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The National Police Air Service (NPAS) were set an objective by the Home Office to

review the feasibility of a future 'blended' fleet of crewed and uncrewed aircraft which would support policing operations.

NPAS are now in the planning stages of an uncrewed aircraft trial. The trial will be carried out from the NPAS Almondsbury base, in a volume of airspace extending approximately 30 kilometres around the base.

The launch site is located underneath controlled airspace which is part of the Bristol airport airspace system. All air activity here requires oversight by Bristol air traffic control.

NATS is the Air Navigation Services Provider (ANSP) at both Bristol and Cardiff Airports. Under licence from the CAA they provide services to aircraft operating under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) in controlled airspace (Class A, C, D and E) and in uncontrolled Airspace (Class G) in around the airspace at both Bristol and Cardiff airports. This includes services to commercial aircraft operating in and out of Bristol and Cardiff airports and to General Aviation (GA), Police, HeliMed, Gliders and Balloons operating in the vicinity of those airports. Services are provided by NATS employed Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) at each unit to ensure effective safe and expeditious use of airspace. The trial area is within this airspace.

During the trial, the only organisation that will be able to act as the Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) will be NATS as the air traffic control services provider for the trial area.

The ANSP is a critical element. The ANSP provider will manage the airspace where the trial is being undertaken, providing surveillance via radar and other low airspace surveillance tools. They will control which aircraft can enter the airspace and provide deconfliction services to aircraft.

If an aircraft unexpectedly enters the restricted airspace, then the ANSP would be responsible for prompt notification to both the encroaching aircraft and the NPAS uncrewed aircraft pilot, to deconflict and prevent a collision.

NATS also require a partner to manage the Airspace Change Process (ACP) to create a restricted volume of airspace for the trial to operate within.

The ACP is a complex process to establish a volume of airspace which is restricted, so that NPAS can ensure the trial is operating in sterile airspace.

The process requires significant engagement between the regulator (CAA), the ANSP (who is NATS) and local stakeholders.

NATS are already managing other ACP applications which are ongoing in the trial airspace area.

Having NATS coordinate the NPAS ACP process will provide safer and seamless integration with these other ACPs: avoiding the routing of air traffic towards the airspace that NPAS wish to use.

To receive authorisation from the CAA to operate uncrewed aircraft in the restricted volume of airspace, NPAS will need to submit an Operator Safety Case (OSC).

The OSC application is a very thorough process and must meet strict requirements of the CAA. For this initial phase of the overall process, NPAS wish to engage NATS to act as coordinator.

The activities to establish the ANSP, ACP and OSC are significantly intertwined:

- the OSC work requires in depth knowledge of the ANSP and ACP
- the ACP requires in depth knowledge of the ANSP and surveillance data available now and in future.

The data that these processes share is ongoing, as they are all 'living' documents that will develop together based on each other's requirements, regulations, and restrictions.

As the three key elements are so dependent on each other and share common critical data, the safest and most efficient method of work is for one entity to perform all three functions. Splitting the work would create potential for critical information to be omitted or misunderstood or delay the processes due to delays in data gathering and understanding from each party involved

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: £449,582

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

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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) were set an objective by the Home Office to review the feasibility of a future 'blended' fleet of crewed and uncrewed aircraft which would support policing operations.

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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

28 February 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

NATS (Services) Ltd

Fareham

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

Companies House

4129270

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: £449,582

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

The High Court of England and Wales

7 Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane

London

EC4A 1NL

Country

United Kingdom