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Award

Agreement relating to AS400 software Hosting and Support

Transport for Greater Manchester

F15: Voluntary ex ante transparency notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-028633

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-052947

Published 30 May 2025, 8:42am

Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

Transport for Greater Manchester

2 Piccadilly Place

Manchester

M13BG

Email

procurement@tfgm.com

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKD33 - Manchester

Justification for not providing organisation identifier

Not on any register

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.tfgm.com

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Other type

Transport Authority

I.5) Main activity

Other activity

Transport

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Agreement relating to AS400 software Hosting and Support

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 48000000 - Software package and information systems

II.1.3) Type of contract

Supplies

II.1.4) Short description

Following a procurement exercise in July 2021, Frontline Consultancy and Business Services

Limited (Frontline) were awarded a 3 year contract to provide TfGM with the hosting and support services for the AS400 system that it currently employs. Information on this contract can be found on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/c01ca9b7-a336-4e97-b0ba-6582c331ecf1>

In July 2024 TfGM publish a VEAT notice seeking an additional 12 month provision of this same service under a new contract. Link to this notice - TfGM AS400 Hosting and Support Services - Find a Tender

TfGM are now seeking to extend, for a 12-month provision the current service. Following the launch of the final tranche of Bus Franchising, the move away from this service has taken longer than previously planned to complete and there is now not enough time available to complete a tender exercise before the current contract expires and to (potentially) have to onboard a new supplier, should that be the result of the tender.

The decision to contract again with Frontline is based on the need to maintain TfGM's AS400 system whilst a new tender exercise is ran, which will also include an allowed period for testing and implementation which may be required.

It should be noted that the decision to extend the current service with Frontline for a period of 12 months will not mean that TfGM will have to wait until the expiry of that contract, so July 2026, to onboard the new supplier. It is TfGM's intention that the two will overlap and that the new contract would commence as soon as is practicable after the procurement process has been completed.

The new tender has now been launched and the CDP reference number for suppliers that might be interested in bidding for this tender is ocds-h6vhtk-052945.

The new tender is for the same services that this VEAT notice has been drafted for, so the iSeries hosting and support service. This will be a 1+1 term contract term and it will be sourced via an Open Tender opportunity under the new Procurement Act 2023.

A change in contractor at this stage, prior to a supplier being chosen by the new tender process, would detract from any value for money delivery and would cause significant risk and disruption to the operation of a number of operator payment systems which would stop working, contract management for operators would not be available, lost mileage (delays due to roadworks) payments would also not be available and a number of systems that require interface into the Network Database to function would also stop.

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: £72,674.57

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Following a procurement exercise in July 2021, Frontline Consultancy and Business Services Limited (Frontline) were awarded a 3 year contract to provide TfGM with the hosting and support services for the AS400 system that it currently employs. Information on this contract can be found on Contracts Finder:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/c01ca9b7-a336-4e97-b0ba-6582c331ecf1>

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TfGM are now seeking to extend, for a 12-month provision the current service. Following the launch of the final tranche of Bus Franchising, the move away from this service has taken longer than previously planned to complete and there is now not enough time available to complete a tender exercise before the current contract expires and to (potentially) have to onboard a new supplier, should that be the result of the tender.

This 12-month period will end on the 01/07/2026 when the new contract, following the new tender (noted below) will come into effect.

The supplier provides the hosting of the AS400 platform and the support associated with its use and upkeep.

The decision to contract again with Frontline is based on the need to maintain TfGM's AS400 platform whilst a new tender exercise, including an allowed period for testing and implementation is ran.

The new tender has now been launched and the CDP reference number for suppliers that might be interested in bidding for this tender is ocds-h6vhtk-052945.

A change in contractor at this stage, prior to a supplier being chosen by the new tender process, would detract from any value for money delivery and would cause significant risk and disruption to the operation of a number of operator payment systems. Contract management for operators would also not be available and the ability to make associated payments would not be available. A number of systems that require interface into the Network Database to function would also stop working, which could impact information that is shared with TfGM customers.

Bus Franchising, which TfGM have now implemented, has made significant changes to TfGM's Bus Operations since it began and will continue to do so. The AS400 infrastructure is the primary platform currently used to support Bus Operations in TfGM.

Many of the applications on the AS400 were written in house by TfGM developers. Approximately 6 years ago a business decision was made to not replace our own developers and so to pass application support to a third party supplier (Frontline). For another supplier to take on the application support at this stage, for such a short time period would mean that there would need to be a new discovery exercise and handover between Frontline and the new supplier (incurring additional and unforeseen costs) to understand the existing code and functionality within the applications which would add further cost and delays to any migration of service.

The cost to TfGM of moving to a new supplier would substantial duplicate the associated costs for the contracting authority.

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

In July 2024 TfGM publish a VEAT notice seeking an additional 12 month provision of this same service under a new contract. Link to this notice - TfGM AS400 Hosting and Support Services - Find a Tender

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

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

30 May 2025

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

Frontline Consultancy and Business Services Limited

Frontline House, Epsom Avenue, Handforth

Wilmslow

SK9 3PW

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

Companies House

02643915

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: £72,674.57

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

High court of England and Wales

London

Country

United Kingdom