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Award

Project MACE - Provision of Infrastructure Upgrades at GPA

Ministry of Defence

UK5: Transparency notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-054749

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Scope

Description

Provision of a service to provide GPA with required infrastructure upgrades to facilitate military use of the airfield.

Contract 1. Project MACE - Provision of Infrastructure Upgrades at GPA

Suppliers

Supplier not yet selected

Contract value

- £960,000 excluding VAT
- £1,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Earliest date the contract will be signed

27 June 2025

Contract dates (estimated)

- 21 July 2025 to 22 June 2026
- 11 months, 2 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 71541000 - Construction project management services

Other information

Description of risks to contract performance

n/a

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Direct award

Direct award justification

- Single supplier - technical reasons
- Defence and security - necessary to enhance or maintain operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces

Transparency Notice (UK05) - Provision of Services for Infrastructure Upgrades at GPA

1. Overview

Air Commercial, part of the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) intends to award a contract to Glasgow Prestwick Airport (GPA) for the provision of services. The estimated value of the contract is £750,000 with a proposed term of 36 weeks. This Direct Award is related to a larger Programme of work, referred to as MACE. 'Project MACE' is the name given to the bolthole operation while the Aerodrome Operating Surfaces (AOS) are resurfaced at RAF Brize Norton. This Programme of work requires a number of aircraft from the Air Mobility Force (AMF) to be relocated to alternative airfields while the works are underway. The requirement at Glasgow Prestwick Airport is for the Voyager A330 fleet. The Voyager A330 aircraft is the RAF's sole Air-to-Air Refuelling tanker, it serves to refuel fast jets and

operates as strategic air transport. If the Voyager fleet are not safely re-housed, they will be unavailable to support the Fast Jet fleet which critically defend UK airspace. For the safe and compliant re-housing of this fleet, a number of low-level upgrades including concrete jacking pads, are required at GPA. These upgrades will facilitate the re-location of the aircraft in the Summer of 2026.

As a covered procurement, this procurement falls to be regulated under the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023.

This Direct Award relies on two justifications as permitted for under the Procurement Act 2023 legislation: Schedule 5, Paragraph 6 (Single Supplier) and Schedule 5, Paragraph 20 (Defence and Security). This Transparency Notice will address each of these justifications below.

2. Grounds Satisfied

Schedule 5 - Paragraph 6 (Single Supplier)

It is considered that the direct award of the contract is lawful pursuant to Section 41 and Schedule 5, Paragraph 6 of the Procurement Act 2023 because competition is absent for technical reasons such that only Glasgow Prestwick Airport can achieve the requirement and there are no reasonable alternatives.

There are strict technical requirements attached to the relocation of the Voyager A330 aircraft. Only one airport, Glasgow Prestwick Airport can meet all of the MOD's technical requirements. GPA is the only airport that could take 7 Voyager aircraft. Whilst GPA requires some financial investment to upgrade the concrete jacking pads to allow maintenance to be performed on the Voyager aircraft for them to remain airworthy all other airfields lack the necessary secure communications that are required to enable the relocation of the Voyager aircraft, an upgrade of communication systems is not possible without significant lead time of multiple years which does not meet the time scales required. Others would require full runway re-construction, again at significant time of several years. This is not in line with the time restrictions of Programme MACE's requirements. Without the pads, the 7 aircraft would quickly become unworthy of flight, jeopardising Defence outputs.

In addition, there are no reasonable alternatives to dispersing the aircraft. The aircraft must be removed to accommodate the works at RAFBN. The requirement stipulates that these aircraft cannot be moved abroad due to security and operational readiness requirements. Another key output of this relocation is to keep the aircraft together to limit the geographical dispersal of the supporting teams, supplies and equipment which are critical to the maintenance of the aircraft while away from base. Dispersing the fleet across a number of sites, would stretch these already scarce resources and would ultimately lead to many of the aircraft becoming unworthy of flight as they would not be

able to receive the level of maintenance required to keep them safe to deploy. The requirement for available for Part 145 compliant hangarage has also been stipulated for this reason to be able to safely and compliantly maintain the aircraft on site.

Schedule 5, Paragraph 20 (Defence and Security)

In addition, it is considered that the direct award of the contract is lawful pursuant to Section 41 and Schedule 5, Paragraph 20 of the Procurement Act 2023 as a defence and security contract (and not only by virtue of section 7(1)(g)) and it is necessary for the contract to be awarded directly to Glasgow Prestwick Airport in order to enhance or maintain the operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces.

The contract is a defence and security contract by virtue of Sections 7(1)(c),

goods, services or works necessary for the development, production, maintenance or decommissioning of military equipment or sensitive equipment; (d), logistics services relating to military equipment or sensitive equipment; and (g), goods, services or works that are otherwise relevant to the operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces of the Procurement Act 2023. It therefore fulfils both the first and second limbs of this ground.

In relation to the third limb, the Direct Award to GPA is necessary to be awarded directly in order to enhance or maintain the operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces. The Voyager A330 aircraft is the RAF's sole Air-to-Air Refuelling tanker, it serves to refuel fast jets and operates as strategic air transport. If the Voyager fleet are not safely re-housed, which these infrastructure upgrades will facilitate, they will be unavailable to support the Fast Jet fleet which critically defend UK airspace. Without the Voyager ready to deploy, fast jets would become inoperable, risking the safety of the UK armed forces, public and its allies. Thorough market research has shown there is only one possible location which meets all of the Defence and Security requirements set by MOD. Directly awarding this contract to GPA, is the only viable route to market to assure the upgrades are made in time for the relocation of aircraft.

3. Summary

For the reasons outlined in this section of the transparency notice, it is considered that the direct award of this defence and security contract to GPA is necessary in order to enhance or maintain the operational capability, effectiveness, readiness for action, safety or security of the armed forces.

Contracting authority

Ministry of Defence

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