

Approval to Extend the Winter Road Weather Forecast Service 2019/2021 to 2022

Date: 21 September 2021

Report to: The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation)

Will the decision be open for call in? ☐Yes ☒No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐Yes ☒No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- This report seeks approval from the Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) to extend the Winter Road Weather Forecast Service 2019/2021 Contract for a further 12 months to 30/09/2022.
- This includes an Annual Price Change Mechanism, as per the contract, the appointed contractors have the opportunity to review their rates and any increase shall not exceed the percentage offered. This is currently: 4.8% but subject to change when September's RPI figures are released.
- The contract was originally awarded in 2019 for a 2-year period. Under Clause Z3 which was included in the contract, we have the option to extend the contract for a further 12 months under the same terms and conditions.
- This is the first of 2 possible 12-month extensions in the contract. The second extension would take the contract to 2023 and take the total contract period to 4 years.
- The contract extension will start from 1st October 2021 for a one-year period until the 30th September 2022 with the incumbent contractor MeteoGroup UK who have agreed to the proposed extension.
- The extension will allow us to keep using the compliant contractor we procured at the first time of tendering under the same terms and conditions. Retendering is not expected to bring any further savings and would incur costs associated with a new tender process.
- This contract provides detailed winter weather forecasts which enables Leeds City Council and other West Yorkshire Councils to plan gritting operations to enable the public to move around the highway network in periods of adverse winter weather more safely than otherwise, in line with a Best Council requirement.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer (Highways & Transportation) is requested to approve the recommendation to extend the Winter Road Weather Forecast Service 2019/2021 Contract for an additional 12 months to 30th September 2022 with MeteoGroup UK.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Winter Road Weather Forecasting Service supplies accurate weather forecasts to enable the Council to order adequate footway and road salt gritting provision for adopted highways over the annual winter period from October to April each year. It enables the Winter Service Plan to be put into action with the confidence that unnecessary treatments will not be carried out. This contract provides winter weather forecasts for all Yorkshire Highway Alliance members.
- 2 Highway Authorities are required to meet responsibilities as set out in 2.18 of the Routine & Winter Service Code published by the Highways England. The purpose is to ensure highways are clear from snow and ice throughout the winter period reducing winter accidents and maintaining the flow of traffic.
- 3 Leeds City Council and the Yorkshire Highway Alliance Authorities deliver their Winter Service Plans through their depots and contractors to ensure mobility and free flow of traffic during the winter months; this is a fulfilment of the Secretary of State obligations as the Highway Authorities. This contract allows the service to be carried out in a cost effective and practical manner.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- 4 The proposals requested in this report have no direct impact on any of the equality characteristics as it is purely an administrative function and therefore it is not applicable to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening at this time.
- 5 During the original tender of this contract it was also considered not applicable for an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment to be undertaken.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 6 Consultation has taken place with the Council depots who have confirmed their need for this contract to be able to deliver the service and are satisfied with the performance of the incumbent contractor.
- 7 The other West Yorkshire Authorities who use the contract have expressed their desire for the contract to be extended to allow them to carry out their winter service plans in the most practical manner.

What are the resource implications?

- 8 The proposal to extend the contract is judged to be value for money and is an effective use of council resources in comparison to preparing quotes for each individual forecast.
- 9 The estimated annual contract value is £54,000.00 for the combined authorities.
- 10 Leeds City Councils estimated spend is around £11,000.00 per annum.
- 11 It has been considered and confirmed that appropriate funding provision is available from revenue budgets as and when the service is required.

What are the legal implications?

- 12 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. All activities relating to the proposed contract extension have been executed strictly in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 13 Extending the contract is a direct consequence of the initial authority to procure and should be treated as a significant operational decision, as such it is not eligible for call in.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 14 Weather forecasts enable the Highway and Transportation department to accurately predict when to enact the Winter Service Plan to order gritting and snow clearing processes during the winter season.
- 15 This contract is necessary to maintain continuity of being able to procure this service ensuring the Winter Service Plan is carried out as efficiently as possible. It is essential that this contract is extended before the existing arrangement expires.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

☒ Inclusive Growth ☒ Health and Wellbeing ☒ Climate Emergency

- 16 Well planned winter maintenance based on detailed weather reports enable highway staff at Leeds City Council and across West Yorkshire to order gritting operations for highways, cycle-ways and footways efficiently and enables the public to move around the highway network in periods of adverse winter weather more safely than otherwise.
- 17 This contract is to provide detailed weather reports to predict adverse weather conditions requiring road salt gritting application across all Yorkshire Highway Alliance Areas. Climate change has resulted in more unpredictable and varied weather throughout the winter period and has made predicting the need for gritting operations even more difficult and this contract is essential to provide highways staff with the necessary information to decide when to carry out the Winter Service Plan.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 18 The extension of this contract is an efficient use of council resources and is judged to be value for money in comparison to preparing quotes for each individual forecast.
- 19 The extension will allow us to keep using the compliant contractor we procured at the first time of tendering on the same terms and conditions and retendering is unlikely to result in any additional savings.

b) How will success be measured?

- 20 The first 2 years of the contract have proved to be successful by providing accurate weather forecasts and aiding the Winter Service Plan. Success will continue to be measured by the accuracy of the weather forecasts provided by the contractor.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 21 The contract extension needs to be in place before the contract expires on the 30th September 2021.

Appendices

- 22 N/A

Background papers

- 23 N/A