

Direct Award of contract to Springboard for Footfall Counting

Date: 6th March 2023

Report of: Head of City Centre Management

Report to: Chief Officer, Operations and Active Leeds

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report recommends that a direct contract award of contract is made to Springboard for a period of two years commencing on 06 March 2023, to continue to provide footfall counting services for Leeds city centre.

The value of the work (£27,809 across two years) is classed as Intermediate Value Procurement under Contract Procedure Rule (CPR) 8.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer, Operations and Active Leeds is requested to approve the direct award of contract under Contract Procedure Rule 8.3. to Springboard for a period of two years, to continue to provide footfall counting services for Leeds city centre. The contract will commence on 06 March 2023 for a period of two years at a contract value of £27,809.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report proposes that CPR 8.3 is invoked in order to directly appoint Springboard to continue to provide footfall data for Leeds city centre for a period of two years from March 2023 to March 2025.
- 2 Footfall is a key metric against which the success of any city or town centre is measured. Leeds City Council has been measuring footfall in Leeds city centre using an automated footfall counting system, provided by Springboard, since 2008. Footfall has been, and will continue to be, one of the key metrics used to measure the city's emergence from the pandemic. The data is sent to over 100 organisations including retailers, shopping centre managers, hospitality businesses and other businesses, who use it to benchmark footfall within their own centres against our 'city data'.
- 3 The Council now has a rich seam of data, detailing footfall across 8 locations in Leeds city centre, every hour of every day for 15 years. This data can be accessed and analysed in great detail and often forms a key part of the assessment of the success of a particular event or time of year. More broadly, the data provides one of the most accurate and relevant metrics we have to give an overall measure of the success of the city centre.
- 4 Springboard is the UK's leading provider of footfall data to towns, cities, shopping centres and retail parks, providing data to over 250 such locations. This means Springboard are uniquely placed to assess Leeds' data against that of other locations, and the Council is provided with regular benchmarking updates as part of the existing contract. Moreover, Springboard provide footfall data for Leeds city centre's largest shopping centre, so this also provides a useful comparator.
- 5 Springboard was appointed on a competitive basis in 2008 and have continued to supply the system since that date.
- 6 Across the proposed 2 year contract, Springboard will maintain the existing contract price which is £13,300 per annum.
- 7 In 2021 the Council, through 'Re-opening High Streets Safely' funding, purchased a different footfall counting system that was designed for district centres rather than the city centre. Test installations in the city centre showed that this (cheaper) system was not capable of replicating the same data as the Springboard system, even though the cameras were affixed in similar locations.
- 8 Contract Procedure Rule 8.3 states that "Where the relevant Chief Officer considers there is genuinely no competition such that only a particular organisation or provider can meet the Council's specific requirements (e.g. when commissioning a unique product or service) a waiver of CPRs 8.1 and 8.2 need not be obtained. However, before making any decision the Authorised Officer must consult with PACS and the lack of competition must be formally evidenced in writing and approved by the relevant Chief Officer as part of a Delegated Decision before the contract is entered into.

Justification for Direct Award

- 9 The justification for the Direct Award is that only Springboard can fulfil the Council's specific requirements at this time because:
- a) Springboard are the only organisation that can provide guaranteed comparability to the existing (15 year) data set. Backwards comparability and consistency of measuring methods is the key aspect of any footfall counting system.
 - b) Springboard are the largest footfall counting organisation in the UK, holding data for over 250 locations. This means Springboard are uniquely placed to assess Leeds' data against that of other locations, and the Council is provided with regular benchmarking updates as part of the existing contract. Moreover, Springboard provide footfall data for Leeds city centre's largest shopping centre, so this also provides a useful comparator.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 10 This proposal will result in a two year contract being directly awarded to Springboard for the continuation of the footfall counting system for Leeds city centre, at an annual cost averaging £13,904 per annum.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

- 11 The data arising from the Springboard system is a key economic metric used to assess the success of Leeds city centre as a destination.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Hunslet and Riverside, Little London and Woodhouse

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 12 City 'partners' such as retailers, shopping centres and others rely on the footfall data to provide a comparator for the success of their own centres or businesses. Any change to the system with promises of backwards comparability would be met by scepticism from the retail sector.

What are the resource implications?

- 13 This proposal is designed to minimise resource implications by continuing with an existing, successful arrangements at no extra costs.

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

- 14 The key risk is that of a claim by another agency that this is anti-competitive. This risk is minimised by the clear rationale offered in section 9.

What are the legal implications?

- 15 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) make provision for this direct award under section 8.3. whereby the lack of competition must be formally evidenced in writing and approved by the relevant Chief Officer as part of a Delegated Decision before the contract is entered into

16 However, this is an interim measure and in order to demonstrate value for money and to test the market, we will undertake a full procurement exercise to award a new contract before the interim contract expires.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

17 The other option is to carry out a full procurement exercise for a contractor.

How will success be measured?

18 The key measure of success is the continued provision of high quality footfall data for the city centre.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

19 The contract will be awarded in March 2023 and will last until March 2025. The Head of City Centre Management will be responsible for implementation.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None