

Finance and Resource Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 21 January 2021

Bustracker – Additional Provision due to COVID-19

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All 7 , 18 , 19
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1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that Committee:

1.1.1 approves contract extensions via waiver of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) for a period to 31 December 2021, with the option of a further one-year extension if required to:

1.1.1.1 Cofely Ineo for the current bustracker system at a cost of approximately £400,000 per annum; and

1.1.1.2 Supporting providers Bridge Radio, Ofcom and Arqiva relating to radio coverage to continue full operation of the current bustracker system, at approximately £135,000 per annum.

1.1.2 notes that this expenditure can be met from the public transport budget.

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Report

Bustracker – Additional Provision due to COVID-19

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the installation of the new bustracker system resulting in delayed implementation. Consequently, the Council requires to extend contracts with the existing suppliers via waivers of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) in order to continue full operation of the current system until the new system is fully installed and operational. The total value of these waivers is approximately £1 million and will be met from the public transport budget.

3. Background

- 3.1 The existing contract with Cofely Ineo was previously extended via waiver of CSOs in [December 2018](#) to allow continued operation and maintenance under the terms of the original contract. It is intended that under these existing terms a one-year extension with the option of a further one-year extension, will be implemented to cover the period of installation of the new system.
- 3.2 The new Bus Station Information system and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) contract was awarded at Finance and Resources Committee on [10 October 2019](#) to 21st Century PLC.

4. Main report

Impact of Covid-19 on Project Plan

- 4.1 The original project plan for the replacement of the current bustracker system expected that Lot 1 (installation of bus station hardware and implementation of Content Management System (CMS)) should have been completed by late summer 2020 and that installation of new Lot 2 bustracker signs would have been well underway, reducing maintenance costs associated with the current bustracker system.

- 4.2 The Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have significantly impacted several key areas of this replacement project, notably, missing data from bus operators due to reduced services running, contractors prohibited from travelling to site and virtual Factory Acceptance Testing, all of which have caused the delay to timescales. The timescales for delivery of the new system remain fluid and are directly connected to the lifting of restrictions associated with the pandemic.
- 4.3 Therefore, the current system will have to remain operational until the new system can be installed. With timescales for installation remaining fluid at present due to Covid-19 restrictions, it is proposed to continue the current maintenance for a further year, with the option of extending for one more additional year if required.

Installation of the new system

- 4.4 As part of the new system, all Lot 1 hardware, with the exception of an external digital information totem, has been installed within Edinburgh Bus Station and is currently undergoing testing.
- 4.5 Site Acceptance Testing requires all project members to be on site to test the functionality of both the new hardware and software. Council Officers, 21st Century PLC and their contractors Trapeze planned to complete this for Lot 1 by late summer 2020 however this was not possible due to Covid-19. This stage is required to be completed prior to the new system being taken over by the Council and for it to be fully operational.
- 4.6 The CMS will manage all information displayed on both the bus station and on-street signs and will deliver real time information to bus users as well as onward travel information for tram and, if desired, train and flight information via new colour screens.
- 4.7 Lot 2 installations will not proceed until all testing has been completed and Lot 1 hardware and software is fully functional and operational.
- 4.8 Due to the delay in completing Site Acceptance Testing for Lot 1, the programme of Lot 2 installations is now planned to begin in Summer 2021.
- 4.9 Installation for Lot 2 is proposed to begin on the main corridor from the west of the city to the city centre as this would allow a return on multi-operator information, benefitting a large number of bus users.

Current System

- 4.10 The current system is based on two contractual agreements between:
- 4.10.1 The City of Edinburgh Council and Cofely Ineo - covering the supply and maintenance of the Bustracker system; and
- 4.10.2 The City of Edinburgh Council and Lothian Buses - covering the responsibilities of each partner regarding financial contributions, system administration operation and ongoing maintenance.

- 4.11 The Bustracker system continues to be successfully delivered under the terms of the original contract. The project will continue to follow those principles in the new contract and the separate Agreement between the City of Edinburgh Council and Lothian Buses.
- 4.12 This approach has produced a successful AVL/RTPI system. Lothian Buses has made a significant contribution and have been and will continue to be consulted on any proposed changes to the maintenance regime.
- 4.13 Cofely Ineo continue to perform well, actively monitoring the system with a dedicated team. They frequently identify problems and resolve issues without the travelling public being aware. Any issues reported are dealt with swiftly and professionally.
- 4.14 As bustracker operates with radio communication, to retain the current system, contracts for radio site rental and licence fees must also be extended until the new system is fully operational. These contracts are with Bridge Radio, OFCOM and Arqiva.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 To minimise disruption to the end user, the existing system must continue to operate under the terms of the new contract until a new system is fully operational. The timescale for this is not fully defined at this stage.
- 5.2 If Committee approve the recommendations in this report, the existing contract will be extended for one year, with the option to extend for a further year if required.
- 5.3 For the installation of the new system:
 - 5.3.1 Site Acceptance Testing of Lot 1 hardware and software will take place when restrictions allow.
 - 5.3.2 Installation of Lot 2 hardware is currently programmed to begin in Summer 2021. This is estimated to take around 12-18 months to complete. Current maintenance costs will be reduced in line with number of replacement signs being installed per month.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 In preparing to recommend the above contract extension, indicative costs were collected from soft market testing exercises of suppliers able to supply the same or similar products. This shows that the contract with Cofely Ineo remains good value, consistent with competitive pricing within the market.
- 6.2 In addition, to reduce the cost to the Council, Cofely Ineo has agreed to freeze the FR/UK indexes and EUR/GBP exchange rate based on 1 January 2017 values.

- 6.3 The annual cost of extending the contract with Cofely Ineo is expected to be approximately £400,000. These costs cover a cross over period between migrating from the Ineo system to a new system. A reduction in hardware and software because of migrating to a new system will result in reduced maintenance payments over time but a timescale for this is unknown at this stage.
- 6.4 The cost of extending the associated payments for radio communication are estimated to be approximately £135,000 in total Bridge Radio (£60,000), Ofcom (£15,000) and Arqiva (£60,000). This will ensure that the current system can remain fully operational until the end of 2021.
- 6.5 An optional one-year extension would be included in the contract to recognise that it is not yet known when Covid-19 restrictions would enable Lot 1 to be fully operational. If this is required, it is expected that the cost of maintenance will be reduced as installation of the new system will be underway and therefore the on-going maintenance costs would be reduced.
- 6.6 The total value of these extensions via waiver is expected to be circa £1 million in total. These costs can be met from the Council's public transport budget.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 This project will provide continued provision or enhancement to the quality of life of users through the enhancement of access to employment, educational, leisure and shopping opportunities.
- 7.2 Withdrawing the service would particularly affect vulnerable users who rely on the reassurance provided by accurate RTPi.
- 7.3 The proposals in this report are designed to help reduce carbon emissions. By providing accurate information for passengers it is hoped to reduce dependence on transport by private car and increase public transport use.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.