

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Friday, 10 March 2023

Bustracker – Additional Provision to End of Contract

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Finance and Resources Committee is asked to approve contract extensions, via a waiver of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs), to the following system suppliers until 31 March 2024:
 - 1.1.1 Ineo Systrans, up to £500,000; and
 - 1.1.2 Supporting providers - Bridge Radio, OFCOM and On Tower UK relating to radio communication coverage to continue full operation of the current Bustracker system, approximately £200,000.

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Report

Bustracker – Additional Provision to End of Contract

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 As a result of ongoing delays, approval is sought to further extend the contracts for the existing Bustracker system, via waivers of the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs), in order to continue full operation of the current system until a new system is fully installed and operational. The total value of these waivers is up to £700,000.

3. Background

- 3.1 The new Bus Station Information system and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) contract was awarded by the Finance and Resources Committee on [10 October 2019](#) to 21st Century PLC (now Journeo PLC). The original project plan sought to deliver completion of Lot 1 (installation of bus station hardware and implementation of Content Management System) by late summer 2020 with Lot 2 (installation of bustracker signs) thereafter.
- 3.2 On [21 January 2021](#) the Finance and Resources Committee approved an extension of the existing contracts to allow the continued operation of the current bustracker system while the new system was implemented. This approval was granted via waiver of CSOs, to allow continued operation and maintenance under the terms of the original contract until a new system, with the new supplier, was implemented.
- 3.3 Due to further delays, an additional contract extension is now required.

4. Main report

Project Update

- 4.1 The installation of the new bus station hardware and implementation of the new Edinburgh Travel Tracker Content Management System (CMS) was completed in December 2021. It is now live and fully operational, delivering one of the UK's most advanced bus station management platforms.

- 4.2 The new CMS will manage all information displayed on both the bus station and new on-street bustracker signs. The new system will deliver multi operator Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) to bus users as well as onward travel information for tram, train, air travel and taxi's, at specific locations, on modern full colour displays.
- 4.3 The COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit have significantly impacted several key areas of this project; most notably:
 - 4.3.1 Missing data from bus operators delayed software development;
 - 4.3.2 The inability to meet in person as a project group caused delays to critical areas of the project i.e. Factory and Site Acceptance Testing for Lot 1 of the project. This inevitably caused a delay to Lot 2 which could not begin until Lot 1 was complete;
 - 4.3.2 Increased prices for critical components have meant suppliers have spent more time searching for best value; and
 - 4.3.3 Increased lead in times for receiving critical parts.
- 4.4 In addition to the above, as society has emerged from the pandemic, many public transport operators have experienced significant issues, such as loss of revenue and a reduction in staffing levels, which has had a major effect on their ability to maintain services and supply both scheduled and real time data. This information is key to the project.
- 4.5 The Council is working closely with all operators within Edinburgh and the SEStran area to improve their real time data prior to installation. Data from most operators is now tracking at the highest percentage to date and will deliver an improved passenger experience.
- 4.6 The Council does not have a contractual agreement with any operator to take part in the bustracker system but provides a real time information system to meet the objectives set out in the Council's City Mobility Plan and developing Public Transport Action Plan to provide attractive sustainable transport.
- 4.7 Lothian Buses' are currently updating the tracking equipment on their fleet but, unfortunately, have also suffered similar delays for the same reasons. As this data is critical to the successful roll-out of new signs, the knock-on impact has been a further delay on the development and testing of the new signs.
- 4.8 The latest position is that Lothian Buses has recently supplied viable data which will allow Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) to go ahead by the end of March 2023. Should testing be successful, installation of new on-street signs will commence by the end of April 2023 with an expected completion date of the end of March 2024.

Contract Extension via waivers of the Council's CSOs

- 4.9 The Council's contractual arrangements to maintain the existing Bustracker system, until the new system is fully operational, are due to expire. These agreements are with Ineo Systrans, Ofcom, Bridge Systems Limited and On Tower UK.

- 4.10 The Bustracker system continues to be successfully delivered under the terms of the original contract.
- 4.11 Upon starting the sign replacements programme, maintenance payments to Ineo Systrans will reduce pro rata in line with the number of signs replaced. Ineo Systrans and the Council will review the number of replaced signs on a monthly basis and will reduce quarterly payments accordingly until there are no signs left to replace when maintenance payments to Ineo Systrans will cease.
- 4.12 Ineo Systrans continue to perform well, actively monitoring the system with a dedicated team.
- 4.13 Indicative costs collected from soft market testing exercises of suppliers, able to supply the same or similar products, showed that Ineo Systrans remain good value with competitive pricing within the market.
- 4.14 In addition, the existing system operates with radio communication, with associated costs for radio site rental and licence fees, which must also be covered until a new arrangement is in place. These costs are payable to Bridge Radio, Ofcom and On Tower UK Ltd.
- 4.15 Upon conclusion of the replacement programme, these costs will no longer be incurred.
- 4.16 Committee is asked to approve the extension of the existing contracts (via waiver of the Council's CSOs) with Ineo Systrans, Bridge Radio, Ofcom and On Tower UK Ltd 31 March 2024, with a reduction in cost ongoing throughout the year associated with the installation of new on-street RTPI signs.

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.
- 5.2 If Committee approve the recommendations in this report, the existing contract will be extended to cover the period to 31 March 2024.
- 5.3 New on-street sign installation will begin in April 2023.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Quarterly payments to Ineo Systrans totalling (up to) £500,000 will secure maintenance to the end of the financial year in 2024. The costs detailed 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.

- 6.2 Ineo Systrans has agreed to continue this maintenance provision and also agreed to maintain prices based on the France/UK indexes and EUR/GBP exchange rate of 1 January 2017 values.
- 6.3 Payments of approximately £200,000 in totality must be paid to Bridge Radio (£85,000), OFCOM (£30,000) and On Tower UK LTD (£85,000) to continue full operation of the current system until the end of the Council's financial year in 2024.
- 6.4 The total value of these extensions via waiver is up to £700,000.
- 6.5 These costs will be met from the 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.