



Pre-Tender Market Engagement

Evaluation/Assessments of Mayoral Combined Authorities CPD4126156

Authority: Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (“the Authority”).

Date Response required: 1pm (GMT) – Friday 23rd February 2024

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Pre-Tender Market Engagement (PTME) seeks information in preparation for the potential procurement of a Supplier (from herein referred to as a “**Potential Supplier**”) to carry out the external readiness checks of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the West Midlands Combined Authority (hereafter referred to as “**the MCAs**”) to provide assurance of readiness for the trailblazer single settlement. The purpose of this PTME is to:
 - 1.1.1 help define the requirement;
 - 1.1.2 help provide a better understanding of the feasibility of the requirement;
 - 1.1.3 understand the best approach;
 - 1.1.4 understand the capacity of the market to deliver and possible risks involved; and
 - 1.1.5 provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions, raise queries and any issues to be addressed at an early stage.
- 1.2 DLUHC shall maintain commercial confidentiality of information received during the PTME.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At Spring Budget 2023, the UK Government (HMG) announced the trailblazer devolution deals with the MCAs and set out its commitment to implement single departmental style settlements (‘single settlements’) for the MCAs at the next Spending Review (SR). In November 2023, HMG published a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting out the principles under which the single settlements with the MCAs will be agreed and implemented.
- 2.2 The settlement will increase the MCAs autonomy, ability to prioritise decisions locally, and ability to reprioritise across its own budgets. This will require MCAs to perform functions which are set out in the MOU. The purpose of the readiness check is prepare and provide assurance of readiness for the single settlement.
- 2.3 Weblinks of the trailblazer devolution deals and the MOU are annexed to this specification. In the MOU it was agreed that ‘to prepare for and provide assurance of readiness for the settlement, DLUHC will request external confirmation of readiness via a readiness check’. The terms of the check will be agreed between DLUHC, the MCAs, and the independent external appointee.
- 2.4 This is an engagement exercise to gain input from organisations who may be interested in providing services as an independent, external assessor to carry out the readiness checks. The findings and recommendations of the reviews will support the MCAs to prepare for the delivery of the new single settlement functions.
- 2.5 The scope of the readiness check will include any new function listed within the MOU and not wider activity within the MCA. Wider activity is monitored by the Local Government Assurance

Framework, and the English Devolution Assurance Framework as an element of it. The independent external assessor will be able to make recommendations to support the steps the MCAs are taking to prepare for the new functions.

- 2.6 Table 1 sets out the three categories for the readiness check and a summary of the new functions which are set out in the MOU.

Theme	Summary
(1) Strategic financial planning	<p>Receiving and overseeing a single settlement grant into a central finance function within the combined authority ensuring it is guided by a local strategy and local assurance framework.</p> <p>Managing fungibility and the transfer of funds between themes including designing grant conditions in-line with the outcomes framework whilst ensuring value for money.</p> <p>Responsible for leading financial and outcome reporting to the Programme Board.</p>
(2) Forecasts, monitoring and reporting	Monitoring the performance and delivery of single settlement-funded activity against the outcome framework and the local outcome delivery plan.
(3) Corporate, commercial and governance	Ensuring grants funded through the single settlement are compliant with all legal obligations.

3 HIGH LEVEL OUTLINE PROJECT OUTCOMES REQUIRED

- 3.1 The following outcomes for the project are being considered;
- 3.2 Objective 1 - Developing Readiness Checks criteria: to ensure all criteria is in line with commitments in the MOU which represent new activity related to the single settlement. DLUHC and the MCAs will provide a list of MOU commitments against each theme provided in table 1. The final criteria will be agreed by DLUHC. We project this will take between one and two weeks.
- 3.3 Objective 2 - Designing the approach to gathering the information working with the MCAs: To design an efficient and effective approach and to work with the MCAs to gather the necessary information to produce a report. We expect this information gathering can take the form of written exchanges, meetings and/or calls. We project this will take between three to four weeks.
- 3.4 Objective 3 - Developing a report: to produce a report setting out the results of the review including setting out any required recommendations for each MCA and an appropriate timeline for implementation according to the issue. We project this will take between two to three weeks.
- 3.5 As part of the evaluation process, DLUHC may consider the Social Value Theme of “Tackling economic inequality”, specifically the policy outcome of creating new business, new jobs and new skills. A specific evaluation question will be included to that effect in the Tender Specification if DLUHC includes this in its evaluation criteria. More information can be found here [Social Value Model Gov UK](#)

4 PROJECT OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

- 4.1 The following outputs are being considered for the project once a supplier is appointed:
- a. The final readiness check checklist
 - b. Summaries of any conducted interviews or other information collected
 - c. A report setting out the conclusions of the readiness check. This should include a summary of the types of information collected and a qualitative assessment of each of the three themes in table 1 and with an assessment of any specific MOU commitment if necessary.
- 4.2 The following KPIs are being considered:
- a) The cost of the supplier remains within agreed parameters;
 - b) The final reports provide robust, evidence-based analysis which underpin any recommendations along with suggested next steps
 - c) Correspondence from the Department to Supplier is answered within [one] working day
 - d) A draft of each review is provided within [4 weeks] of commissioning

5 KEY DATES & TENDERING PROCESS

- 5.1 If it is decided this service is required, it is anticipated that a procurement may start in June or July 2024 with the contract to commence in July 2024. These indicative dates are for information purposes only. DLUHC reserve the right to amend these dates at any time, and potential suppliers rely on them entirely at their own risk.
- 5.2 The contract is expected to be for a period of between two to four months.
- 5.3 DLUHC are considering the use of the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Management Consultancy Framework Three (MCF3) Ref: RM6187 to undertake this procurement. However, DLUHC may determine that this requirement is more suitable for the open market and therefore would be interested in responses from any Potential Suppliers.

6 RESPONSE

- 6.1 Please respond by email to commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk with the following by 1pm GMT Friday 23rd February 2024 (the "Response Deadline").
- **Q1:** Would you be interested in bidding for this project? Is there any further information that would be helpful?
 - **Q2:** Is this project deliverable in the timeframe proposed?
 - **Q3:** Is this project deliverable within a maximum budget of £100,000? What would the indicative cost be for this piece of work?
 - **Q4:** Do you have any comments on the Objectives and Outputs proposed for this project?
 - **Q5:** Do you have any comments or suggestions on the KPIs being proposed for this project?
 - **Q6:** Are the proposed Social Value Themes, Policy Outcomes and Criteria appropriate for this requirement? Please elaborate on your reasons why and/or suggest alternatives that could be applied and why these alternatives would be more relevant?
 - **Q7:** In your opinion, what is the level of risk of modern slavery in your supply chain? Can modern slavery risks be managed / mitigated within the service?

7 QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- 7.1 Potential Suppliers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this PTME document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted by email to commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk only. Please use the reference “**CPD4126156 Evaluation/Assessments of Mayoral Combined Authorities**” in the subject line of the email.
- 7.2 To ensure that all Potential Suppliers have equal access to information regarding this PTME exercise, responses to questions raised by Potential Suppliers will be published in a “Questions and Answers” document, which will be published as part of this engagement notice, with updates appearing at regular intervals (approximately two to three working days).
- 7.3 Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
- 7.4 If a Potential Supplier wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being revealed, then the Potential Supplier must state this in their email and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If the DLUHC does not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Supplier will be invited to decide whether:
 - 7.4.1 the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
 - 7.4.2 it wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

8 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 8.1 This PTME will help the Authority to refine the requirements and to understand the potential level of interest in the delivering requirements. It will also aid Potential Supplier’s understanding of the requirements in advance of any formal competitive tender exercise.
- 8.2 The Authority reserves the right to change any information contained within this PTME at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely upon it entirely at their own risk.
- 8.3 The Authority reserves the right not to proceed with a competitive tender exercise after this PTME or to award any contract.
- 8.4 Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to this PTME must be borne by the Potential Supplier.
- 8.5 No down-selection of Potential Suppliers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this PTME.
- 8.6 The Authority expects that all responses to this PTME will be provided by Potential Suppliers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
- 8.7 No information provided by a Potential Supplier in response to this PTME will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the Potential Supplier, in any subsequent formal procurement process.

Annex 1: Memorandum of Understanding - [MOU - Government Link](#)