



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

T: 03459 335577  
helpline@defra.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Your ref:  
Our ref: ecm\_65514  
Date: 28/09/2022

Dear [REDACTED]

## Award of contract for the supply of Surrey Hills AONB Designation Extension Project

Following your proposal for the provision of Surrey Hills AONB Designation Extension Project to Natural England, we are pleased to award this contract to you.

This letter (Award Letter) and its Annexes set out the terms of the contract between Natural England as the Authority and [REDACTED] as the Supplier for the provision of the Services. Unless the context otherwise requires, capitalised expressions used in this Award Letter have the same meanings as in the terms and conditions of contract set out in Annex 1 to this Award Letter (the “**Conditions**”). In the event of any conflict between this Award Letter and the Conditions, this Award Letter shall prevail. Please do not attach any Supplier terms and conditions to this Award Letter as they will not be accepted by the Authority and may delay the conclusion of the Agreement.

For the purposes of the Agreement, the Authority and the Supplier agree as follows:

1. The Services shall be performed at [REDACTED].
2. The charges for the Services shall be as set out in Annex 2 / [REDACTED].
3. The specification of the Services to be supplied is as set out in Annex 3 / [REDACTED].

4. The Term shall commence on 3/10/2022 and the Expiry Date shall be 30/09/2023.

5. The address for notices of the Parties are:

Authority	Supplier
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

6. The following persons are Key Personnel for the purposes of the Agreement:

Name	Title
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

7. The Authority may require the Supplier to ensure that any person employed in the provision of the Services has undertaken a Disclosure and Barring Service check. The Supplier shall ensure that no person who discloses that he/she has a conviction that is relevant to the nature of the Services, relevant to the work of the Authority, or is of a type otherwise advised by the Authority (each such conviction a “**Relevant Conviction**”), or is found by the Supplier to have a Relevant Conviction (whether as a result of a police check, a Disclosure and Barring Service check or otherwise) is employed or engaged in the provision of any part of the Services.

## Payment

Our preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid purchase order number (PO Number), to [REDACTED] Within 10 working days of receipt of your countersigned copy of this letter, we will send you a unique PO Number. You must be in receipt of a valid PO Number before submitting an invoice.

To avoid delay in payment it is important that the invoice is compliant and that it includes a valid PO Number, PO Number item number (if applicable) and the details (name and telephone number) of your Authority contact (i.e. Contract Manager). Non-compliant invoices will be sent back to you, which may lead to a delay in payment. If you have a query regarding an outstanding payment please contact our Accounts Payable section either by email to [REDACTED] or by telephone [REDACTED] between 09:00-17:00 Monday to Friday.

**Liaison**

For general liaison your contact will continue to be [redacted]  
[redacted] or, in their absence, [redacted]  
[redacted]

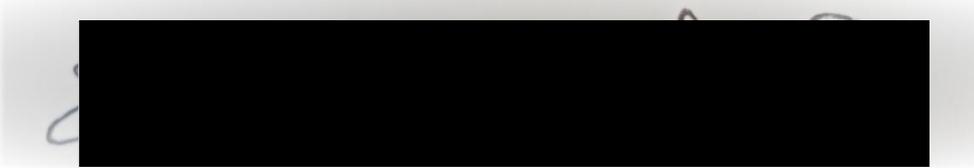
We thank you for your co-operation to date and look forward to forging a successful working relationship resulting in a smooth and successful delivery of the Services. The Authority would be grateful if you could arrange the contract to be executed, by way of electronic signature, on behalf of [redacted] as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]  
[redacted]

***Execution of this award notification letter is carried out in accordance with EU Directive 99/93 (Community framework for electronic signatures) and the Electronic Communications Act 2000. The Contract will be formed on the date on which both Parties communicate acceptance of its terms on the Authority's eSourcing System.***

Signed for and on behalf of Natural England

Name: [redacted] [redacted]	Name: (Procurement)
Signature: 	Signature:
Date: [redacted]	Date:

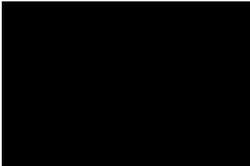
We accept the terms set out in this Award letter and the annexed Conditions.

Signed for and on behalf of [REDACTED]

Name: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	Date:

**Annex 1**

**Terms and conditions**



**Annex 2**

**Pricing Schedule**



## **Annex 3**

### **BOUNDARY DRAFTING, STATUTORY AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION, NOTICE PERIOD AND ONGOING TECHNICAL ADVICE CONTRACT**

#### **Background**

Natural England is the Government's advisor on the natural environment. We provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England's rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy. We work with farmers and land managers; business and industry; planners and developers; national and local government; interest groups and local communities to help them improve their local environment.

Natural England has powers under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) to consider which areas meet the statutory criterion for designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and then to designate such areas. We have produced an internal guidance document ('Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation as National Park or AONB' updated in June 2021) to assist Natural England staff in our role in undertaking this responsibility and which accompanies this specification<sup>1</sup>. However, it has been recognised by the Government Minister, Lord Gardiner, and more recently in the 'Glover' [Landscapes Review](#) that the current National Park and AONB designation processes are complex, prescriptive, time consuming and expensive. Natural England recognises these issues and has already begun to identify opportunities to enable the process to be more collaborative, engaging and streamlined. In July 2020 Natural England's Board committed to testing and trialling a new approach through the next designation project. A suitable contractor is required to assist in determining the case for an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB.

#### **The Surrey Hills Designation Project**

The Natural England Board has now approved a project to determine whether the Surrey Hills AONB boundary should be extended and if so in which specific areas. The Board has also approved a new co-designed and improved designation process. Collaboration underpins the improvements: including partners in project governance, facilitated engagement for stakeholders, participatory evidence gathering and clear messaging to communities to support greater understanding and transparency. We also want to test the use of new technologies, for example participatory GIS web apps to support evidence gathering. This is all within the framework of the existing legislation.

Important aspects of the Surrey Hills Designation Project therefore will be to test the new process, including opportunities for further improvement and time efficiencies, and trial new and innovative approaches under the existing legislation. In this project particular emphasis is being placed on:

- a co-designed collaborative engagement process; and
- the use of the latest available technologies in the gathering of evidence and mapping.

It is our intention through this contract to employ a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to assist in:

1. the development and delivery of a collaborative process with facilitated stakeholder engagement,
2. identifying and utilising modern technologies and ‘citizen science’ approaches to support evidence gathering by local stakeholders and
3. to the further technical requirements of this project as set out below.

A Surrey Hills Management Advisory Group (MAG) and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) have been established to assist in all aspects of the project where appropriate within the legislation. These Groups include representatives from local authorities, Natural England and partner organisations with a range of technical expertise.

These groups will be convened to meet periodically during the project in order to assist Natural England and the Contractor with the delivery of this specification. Meetings will be held virtually although, when allowed, face to face meetings in Surrey may be required.

Having worked collaboratively with Natural England and the TAG and MAG in the completion of the tasks set out below, all consequent final reports, maps and other outputs will be submitted by the contractor to Natural England to determine the final outcome under the powers vested in it by the CRow Act 2000.

### **3.1 Detailed Specification**

All technical terms referred to in this specification are used with the meaning attached to them in Natural England’s Guidance document, which should be used as the current approved framework for this work.

The relevant assessments and other documents for the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB boundary variation provide an indication of the level of technical detail that will be required in undertaking equivalent work for the Surrey Hills boundary review. These can be found under the ‘Related’ heading via the Government consultation platform linked [here](#) .

Advice will be requested on discrete tasks as and when required, as described in greater detail below..

The Contractor will be required to undertake the specified tasks with regard to the Natural England’s statutory duty as set out in section 83(7) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, through the practical application of the approach as set out in Natural England’s Guidance document.

**This contract covers the tasks detailed below.**

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as ‘Natural England’s Guidance’ in the remainder of this specification – see appendix H.

## **STAGES that this contract relates to:**

**Task 1 Produce a draft Boundary:** Working collaboratively with the Management Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Group facilitate the identification of a detailed proposed boundary for use in the statutory and public consultation, under guidance from Natural England. This should be produced utilising the boundary setting considerations set out in Natural England's Guidance document and also following Ordnance Survey best practice in boundary making (a copy can be supplied if needed). The proposed boundaries should be mapped at 1:25,000 scale and accompanied by a Boundary justification report which identifies and reports on issues of concern or requiring clarification in relation to the proposed detailed boundary. An example of a boundary justification report can be found via this link <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-aonb/>.

The output from Task 1 will be the submission of two sets draft boundary maps and GIS layers, (one boundary layer correct at 1:25,000 scale and one correct at 1:2,500 scale) and a written report to Natural England for review and approval.

**Task 2 Produce a short plain English Consultation Document** for use during the Statutory and Public Consultation, to accompany the consultation questionnaire. The full technical assessments will also be available online, but this document needs to provide background to explain what an AONB is, the designation process and short summary information on the assessments, to aid in completing the consultation form.

This summary report should be of a format agreed by Natural England. An example ("[SC&H AONB extension consultation document](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-aonb/)") can be found via the following link: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-aonb/>

### **Task 3: Engagement activities during Statutory and Public consultation**

Implement actions identified in the stakeholder engagement plan to facilitate stakeholder and community engagement with the consultation process. This is expected to be a significant part of the planned community engagement involving a range of engagement methods in seeking to ensure wide participation of local communities, including engagement with all protected groups identified within the Natural England produced Equality Impact Assessment.

**Task 4: Analysis of Statutory and Public Consultation Responses:** Once the formal Statutory and Public Consultation has taken place, code and analyse the responses relating to the assessment of natural beauty, desirability and the detailed boundary, producing a detailed rationale for each issue raised. The rationale should consider whether the quality of the evidence supplied has merit and warrants changes to the proposals and/or evidence base. Further site work will be required, in order to assess the accuracy and significance of the evidence supplied, on the ground. It will be necessary to draw on extant relevant legal and other precedent, past planning inquiry reports and Secretary of State 'Designation Decision' Letters, in developing the rationale for agreeing with or refuting individual issues raised.

A detailed Consultation Analysis Report should be produced containing the analysis of the issues raised and any action which should be considered where the evidence is sufficiently convincing that a change to the proposals is considered necessary and where no action is recommended, a clear rationale (rebuttal) as to why no change is required. This report should be similar in content and style to that produced for the extension to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONBs accessible via the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/775552/sch-aonb-boundary-variation-consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775552/sch-aonb-boundary-variation-consultation.pdf)

**Task 5:** Assist with the drafting a paper to seek Natural England Board approval of a draft Order with regard to amending the boundary of the Chilterns AONB and approval to proceed to a formal period of Notice.

**Task 6:** Plan and proceed with the notice period and analyse and respond to representations received during the Notice period.

**Task 7:** Support Natural England's Board approval for submission of an Order to the Secretary of State (Defra) varying the boundary of the [REDACTED] AONB.

### **Potential additional activities**

The following tasks may arise at any stage during the designation process, from contract start onwards (although there is no guarantee that any particular task outlined above will be required). These additional activities would be funded; if there is a need for additional work the contractor would commission the work on an ad-hoc basis.

The need for such advice is likely to arise from issues raised by stakeholders including during the Statutory and Public Consultation, or in evidence submitted by supporters or objectors or if further research requirements are identified by Natural England and/ or the MAG.

- **Ongoing technical advice:** Additional tasks will be commissioned as the project progresses and as required (see below for commissioning process). If requested under the terms of this framework contract, Contractors will need to be able to provide the following services in relation to the study area:
- **Landscape advice:** including landscape character assessment, evaluating landscapes for designation, advice on landscape designation, drawing boundaries, making field assessments and recording landscape evidence (photographic and written), landscape impact assessments and related services.
- **Cultural heritage advice** including gathering, interpreting and evaluating evidence regarding relevant cultural heritage of the study area, with particular emphasis on the contribution of the area's built environment, historic environment, and the literary and artistic heritage as well as its cultural traditions to the natural beauty of the area. Good knowledge of the area will be advantageous.
- **Natural heritage advice** including gathering, interpreting and evaluating evidence on habitats, species and geological features of the study area at a landscape scale, advising on the role and importance of particular habitats, species and geological features in a given landscape character area and perhaps occasionally verifying ecological and geological evidence in the field (contractors are unlikely to be required to carry out detailed species or habitats surveys or detailed surveys of geological evidence in the field, if fieldwork is required it will be at a very general level).
- **Planning advice** respond to any requests for planning advice in the study area
- **Database design and management** including designing and managing Excel worksheets of the results to track and collate stakeholder responses, managing evidence database linked to a GIS etc.

**GIS and cartography** including processing geographic information, geocoding information, plotting boundaries accurately, producing maps to various specifications at short notice.

Examples of the range of typical work may include:

- a) one-off site visits (for instance, to verify evidence submitted by a third party);
- b) reviewing a substantial objection to designation prepared by professional consultants;
- c) incorporating additional information into the evidence base and revising recommendations;
- d) reviewing boundary recommendations in light of representations made by the public;
- e) attending meetings to explain and defend recommendations;
- f) advising on and evaluating emerging development plan policies;
- g) preparing maps and GIS databases;
- h) designing and managing databases of stakeholders and stakeholder responses; etc.

Some tasks may require a combination of any of the above services.

### **Additional information regarding ongoing technical advice**

Any further tasks will be commissioned from the contractor on an ad-hoc basis. The following principles will apply:

- Level of work: The workload under this contract will fluctuate and we are unable to guarantee any particular level of work, including a guaranteed minimum.
- Method of Working: The contract will be on a 'call-off' basis whereby, for an agreed day rate, the consultant will take instructions from project staff and undertake work as and when it arises. Therefore, as such there is no guaranteed level of work.
- The detailed arrangements and way of working for each task will be agreed between Natural England's relevant lead officer and the consultant before any work gets under way.
- We often need to call for work at short notice and consultants will need to work to tight timescales and strict deadlines. Contractors will be required to provide a detailed estimate of the amount of time any individual task, outlined above will take and start work on a task with limited notice in certain cases. We need to retain flexibility in the type of tasks undertaken by the consultants.

### **Steering Arrangements**

A timetable of meetings will be agreed with both Natural England and the Surrey Hills Management Advisory Group (MAG) which the Contractor will be required to attend. This will include an initial inception meeting with Natural England (probably via MS Teams or Zoom) to discuss and agree contractual arrangements.

Number and timing of further meetings to be proposed by the consultant and agreed by the Contract Manager and MAG. Natural England will supply relevant documents and background information, keep consultants up to date with Natural England's work, and will meet the consultants at a frequency to be agreed to discuss the latest developments and any relevant issues.

### **Expertise and Skills Required**

The Contractor must provide an overall Project Manager, together with a named senior member of staff to act as lead consultant for each element of the work being tendered for. For the avoidance of doubt, we are aware that an individual team member may be capable of leading a number of tasks or providing more than one service.

To cover the range of work required, we are looking for a professional Contractor with multi-disciplinary skills and experience. The expertise and skills required to fulfil the specification encompass both landscape and stakeholder engagement expertise. database design and

management, GIS and cartography skills will also be required. The Contractor's team may involve a combination of staff although we expect all staff to be professionally qualified.

In addition to the necessary technical skills, the following generic skills will be required for all elements of the work:

- excellent written skills;
- excellent inter-personal and presentational skills,
- the ability to meet tight deadlines whilst maintaining high quality outputs;
- a flexible approach to meet a varied and fluctuating work load and respond to organisational change;
- an awareness of the nature of Natural England's work;
- the ability to establish good working relationships with Natural England staff and local stakeholders;
- experience of working with public sector bodies.

High standards are expected overall, but particularly in the following respects:

- i. Landscape assessment
- ii. Stakeholder engagement and facilitation
- iii. Use of innovative approaches
- iv. The appropriate use of evidence is critical. The quality of evidence should be examined in every instance. In some cases it may be necessary to refer to evidence of lower quality, but this should always be made explicit. Professional opinion is necessarily a component of this work, but should always be identified as such.
- v. Evidence and sources of information should be referenced to an academic standard. Where conclusions are presented, the evidence which supports them must be cited.
- vi. Good use of English is essential. All work should be written in language that is easy to understand by a wide range of audiences while maintaining accuracy.

Factual information should be verified and consultants should have a high degree of confidence in any statements made or it should be explicitly stated where there is uncertainty.

## **Outputs**

The following specific outputs will be required:

- Maps indicating proposed boundaries: to be at 1:25,000 scale for use on any Designation Order and 1:2,500 scale using MasterMap, for use as the formal designation boundary layer on ChilternsMAGIC and by relevant local authorities. The 1:25,000 layer should be produced with the boundary snapped to the relevant boundary features named in the boundary justification.
- Boundary Justification Report including a short description of the boundary identifying the features followed.

All outputs must be in accordance with the 'Specification' as set out above and with Natural England's Guidance.

All reports and maps submitted under this contract are to be emailed to the named Contract Manager as draft documents for review and approval. Three hard copies, one unbound, are also required. Natural England may also ask for certain reports in PDF format. All reports must have

page numbers, paragraph numbers and a date. Failure to include these will render any report unsatisfactory. Any spreadsheet data supplied should be MS Excel compatible. Any graphs, figures or maps should be provided both in digital format such as pinpoint, or an ASCII or similar, and as full colour hard copy at an agreed scale and size. Any GIS output should be in MapInfo or ESRI format or preferably both.

## **Relationship Management**

The following paragraphs define how the relationship between Natural England and the Contractor will be structured and managed during the term of the Agreement.

The Contractor's Project Manager responsibilities shall include but not be limited to:

- Liaison with Natural England Contract Manager on all aspects of the Service;
- Monitoring the delivery of the Services to the Service Levels and reporting any Service Failure to Natural England;
- Attending a review meeting(s) with Natural England as agreed which will include the review of service performance and progress, and other liaison meetings as required;
- Planning and implementing remedial actions when necessary.

The Contractor will advise and agree with Natural England in writing of any change to the Project Team.

The Contractor shall liaise with Natural England on any changes to be made to the Service whilst undertaking authorised Service enhancements.

Amendments to the provisions of the Agreement must be approved by Natural England in accordance with the Change Control Procedure defined in a schedule of the contract.

The Contractor shall provide:

- a). All necessary hardware and software to meet the needs of the project;
- b). all testing to ensure the services meet Natural England's requirements;
- c). accommodation, office equipment as required

## **Supporting Documentation**

Tender submissions should include the following:

- Risk Assessments
- Lone working practices
- Research Methodologies
- Health & safety Policies/certificates
- Environment Policies
- VAT registration number
- Public Liability Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Licenses
- CV's
- Past Work
- Sustainable Procurement Practices

## Sustainability

The successful contractor is expected to pursue sustainability in their operations, thereby ensuring Natural England is not contracting with a supplier whose operational outputs run contrary to Natural England's objectives. The successful contractor will need to approach the project with a focus on the entire life cycle of the project. The successful contractor is likely to be able to provide a copy of their environmental policy and any environmental accreditation schemes such as ISO 14001 or EMAS which they have been awarded or are working towards.

- a. Operational Sustainability - Explain to Natural England what your organisation is doing to incorporate sustainability within its operations. This may include any details you are able to provide in relation to steps you may be taking to reduce your carbon footprint.
- b. Environmental Management - Detail what you will do to assess the environmental impact of completing this project and provide mitigations. Examples may include operational measures to reduce emissions and noise impacts, efficient energy use, efficient use of raw materials and minimisation of waste where possible.
- c. Biosecurity - Plant and animal diseases, pests and invasive non- native species (INNS) can be spread between and within sites by visitors. Contractors must take adequate biosecurity precautions to ensure that the risk of spreading disease, pests and INNS is minimised i.e. vehicles, equipment and clothes (particularly boots) must be clean before entering a site, and cleaned again before leaving. Vehicles, equipment and clothes must be free of loose mud and plant debris and, as far as possible, free of water

These basic precautions should be carried out as a matter of routine, but some sites may require additional biosecurity measures (for example disinfection where there is a danger of transferring crayfish plague between waters). The contractor must demonstrate an understanding of biosecurity risks in general, and of the good practice measures that will minimise risks from any specific threats they are informed of.

Please therefore provide details of your policies/procedures with regard these matters.

- d. Transport – Please explain how your organisation goes about minimising the environmental impact of transport in delivery, particularly emphasising any aspects that could be relevant to the delivery of this contract. This could include the transport distances of materials, promoting green travel plans to site for employees, car sharing, use of minibuses, use of cleaner fuels for transport etc.

### 3.1 Travel and Subsistence

(Rates should include travel and subsistence; this information is for guidance).

All Travel and Subsistence should be in line with the Travel and Subsistence Policy. Claims should always be supported by valid receipts for audit purposes and must not exceed any of the stated rates below. Should the stated rate be exceeded, Natural England reserve the right to reimburse only up to the stated rate.

## Rail Travel

All Journeys – Standard class rail unless a clear business case demonstrating value for money can be presented. This includes international rail journeys by Eurostar and other international and overseas rail operators.

## Mileage Allowance

Mileage Allowance	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
████████████████████ ██████████████████	████	████
████████████████████ ██████████████████	████	████
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██████	████	████

\*NB the 'no public transport rate' for car and van travel can only be claimed where the use of a private vehicle for the journey is essential e.g. on grounds of disability or where there is no practical public transport alternative. If the use of the vehicle is not essential the 'public transport rate' should be claimed.

\*\* Under HMRC rules this expense is taxable.

## UK Subsistence

Location	Rate
London (Bed and Breakfast)	████ per night
Rates for specific cities (Bed and Breakfast)	Bristol █████ per night Weybridge █████ per night Warrington █████ per night Reading █████ per night
UK Other (Bed and Breakfast)	████ per night for all other locations

## 2.0 Performance Management Framework (including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs))

Key milestones		Date
Identifying proposed boundaries	Key milestone	W/C 10th October 2022
Submission to the Natural England Board of assessments on whether Natural England should vary the boundary of the existing Surrey Hills AONB for	Key milestone	W/C 2nd January 2023

approval to undertake a statutory and public consultation		
Prepare documentation for and subsequent undertaking of the formal statutory and public consultation	Key milestone	W/C 9th January 2023
	Key milestone	
Review responses to the statutory consultation prior to seeking Natural England Board approval of a draft Order with regard to amending the boundary of an existing AONB and approval to proceed to a formal period of Notice		W/C 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Plan and proceed with the formal period of notice		W/C 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
Analyse representations received during the formal Notice period, potentially amend technical assessments and proposal, followed by seeking approval from Natural England's Board for the making and submitting an Order to the Secretary of State (Defra) to vary the boundary of the [REDACTED] AONB		W/C 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Contract completion.	Key milestone	End of September 2023
Teleconferences (details to be agreed at the inception meeting but expected to be normally of no more than of one hour's duration) thereafter to update on progress and if required address issues	Meeting	Up to 2 meetings every fortnight – dates and times to be confirmed