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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), herein referred to as “The Authority”, is undertaking a procurement exercise to award a Contract to a Supplier to identify and review the trigger thresholds used throughout Approved Document B (ADB). This review should include the use of purpose groups used to trigger different fire safety provisions, and the height threshold used in Regulation 7(4) of the Building Regulations 2010.
- 1.2 The aim of this project is to ensure that the thresholds used in the guidance are based on relevant and up to date evidence and provide adequate guidance to designers. This research project is expected to identify the basis and underpinning evidence for trigger thresholds used throughout ADB and in Regulation 7(4) of the Building Regulations 2010. It will also support a review of the current provisions in ADB and alternative approaches.
- 1.3 The project will review and provide evidence and knowledge on the current provisions in ADB. The project will establish the current research knowledge and review it in view of modern building design approaches, technology, building use, and operation.
- 1.4 The project will develop robust data and evidence that will enable MHCLG to support future policy decisions for possible improvements, simplification, and changes of guidance so that people can have confidence in the regulatory standards.
- 1.5 The proposal should include establishing an expert Technical Steering Group to support MHCLG officials at a strategic decision-making level of the project and assist where necessary, steering the research programme and providing feedback on the research methodology, as well as key deliverables and milestones throughout the duration of the project.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

- 2.1 The Authority's aim is to help create great places to live and work right across the country and to back communities to come together and thrive. The Authority's responsibilities include:
 - Ensuring people throughout the country have access to affordable and high-quality housing
 - Providing opportunities for all parts of the country to thrive economically
 - Building integrated communities
 - Supporting effective local government
- 2.2 Amongst its other interests, the Authority has also established the Building Safety Programme which is responsible for delivering the changes where needed to make the building safety system fit for purpose.
- 2.3 The Building Regulations control certain building work – principally to protect the health, safety and welfare of people in and around buildings. Part B of



Schedule 1 of the regulations relates to fire safety aspects of building design and construction and Approved Document B (ADB), the statutory guidance to the regulations which demonstrates how the provisions can be complied with.

- 2.4 In response to Dame Judith Hackitt's review following the Grenfell tragedy in 2017 the Government has committed to a full-scale [review](#) of Approved Document B.
- 2.5 The technical review started with a [Call for Evidence](#) which invited views on technical issues and further improvements that could be made to ADB. A [summary](#) of the findings from the call for evidence was published on the 5 September 2019.
- 2.6 The findings were used to set a proposed agenda, terms of reference and programme for the review and to identify what research is needed to inform the review.

3. BACKGROUND TO REQUIREMENT

3.1 Approved Document B

- 3.2 Through the Call for Evidence, stakeholder workshops, and advice from the Building Regulation Advisory Committee (BRAC), The Authority has determined that the purpose groups and other trigger thresholds for different provisions used throughout ADB require review.
- 3.3 Trigger thresholds in ADB are used to determine a number of fire safety provisions including sprinklers, maximum compartment size, single stair allowances, wet risers, and fire resistance performance requirements. The supplier will require a good working knowledge of ADB, fire-fighting limitations, fire science principles, and the use and determination of adequate fire safety provisions.
- 3.4 Trigger thresholds are used to account for the variations in the risk profile of buildings as their size and use change. The Authority believes that this can be an effective approach for new buildings but considers that thresholds should be based on robust evidence and a broader understanding of building risk. This project will be required to develop an extensive evidence base regarding factors contributing to building fire risk to better underpin a review of thresholds used throughout ADB.
- 3.5 Previous research commissioned by The Authority has identified that several thresholds in ADB have evolved from the Post-War Building Studies and may now need review in the context of trends in modern construction, design, building use, firefighting capacity/operation, and fire data.
- 3.6 Building uses are classified within different Purpose Groups based on an expectation of the fire risk associated with common design approaches and building use. A variety of other trigger thresholds, such as height, are used to set different fire safety provisions across different building types and designs.
- 3.7 A total of 98 responses were submitted regarding trigger thresholds in response to the [Call for Evidence](#). Responses covered a variety of triggers and provisions. Respondents questioned the existing approach, underlying

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background/assumptions, and considered that strengthened provisions were needed based on up to date evidence:

- Threshold for sprinkler provision in blocks of flats - the Government published in May 2020 an amendment to Approved Document B providing sprinklers in blocks of flats with a storey more than 11m in height from November 2020;
- Provision of dry and wet risers;
- Basement depth trigger thresholds;
- Protected refuges/lobbies in residential buildings;
- Single stair allowances in residential buildings;
- Maximum travel distances;

3.8 Purpose groups were also raised specifically in 90 responses to the Call for Evidence. There was support for retaining the current format but also a clear view that further refinement or definition of purpose groups would be beneficial.

3.9 Discussions with stakeholders including fire safety professionals and academics has further refined the requirements objectives regarding the review of trigger thresholds throughout ADB. One clear view from these discussions was that international examples of regulatory guidance and practice should be explored as part of this project.

3.10 **Building (Amendment) Regulations 2018**

3.11 The Building Regulations were amended following consultation to restrict the use of materials in an external wall and specified attachments to those achieving Class A2-s1,d0 or Class A1 in accordance with BS EN 13501-1:2007+A1:2009.

3.12 The requirements of the ban currently apply to building work as defined in the Building Regulations, material changes of use or new buildings with a storey at least 18m above ground level that contain one or more dwellings, an institution, or a room for residential purposes including student accommodation.

3.13 The ban on combustible materials in and on the external walls of certain building types is currently limited to buildings with a top occupied storey above 18m. There have been calls to reduce this height threshold and expand the ban to a broader range of buildings. We [consulted](#) on a proposal to lower the height threshold to 11m, and to include hotels, hostels, and boarding houses within the scope of the ban. We are currently reviewing the responses to the consultation.

3.14 The amendment to the Building Regulations was introduced alongside a commitment to review the effectiveness of the ban annually through engagement with Building Control Bodies and the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC). That review has concluded that further research is required into how best to determine an appropriate height threshold for application of the ban across different building types.



4. DEFINITIONS

Expression or Acronym	Definition
ADB	Approved Document B (Fire Safety) volumes 1 and 2 2019 edition as amended in May 2020
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

5. SCOPE OF REQUIREMENT

5.1 The overall scope of the project is to:

- Identify, collect and review the available evidence base regarding all trigger thresholds used throughout ADB and provide evidence and knowledge of international examples of regulatory approaches and guidance;
- Review the current trigger thresholds, including the purpose group classification system, in ADB including further/alternative provisions to enable The Authority to make informed future policy proposals;
- Collect and develop evidence and an assessment methodology to support review of the height threshold for relevant buildings as defined in Regulation 7(4) of the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

5.2 The Supplier will be expected to establish costs, benefits and impact of alternative approaches not currently detailed in the supplementary guidance.

5.3 The scope of buildings are those covered by the Building Regulations and more specifically ADB. Uncommon buildings and building types outside the scope of ADB (e.g. airports, shopping centres) are outside of the scope for this project

5.4 At the completion of each milestone a suitable review will be carried out to ensure the suitability of research and allow for variations (improvements, expansion, and/or reduction). Such variations will be subject to formal change control where they include cost implications.

5.5 Facilities for face to face or video conference meetings with The Authority and stakeholder groups established to further research goals of the project should be provided by the supplier.

5.6 The supplier will establish facilities for face to face or video conference call meetings with MHCLG and other stakeholder groups to discuss any further research goals of the project required to deliver updates and agree elements with The Authority, and as required to deliver the project objectives.

5.7 The Technical review programme comprises a number of workstreams covering different policy areas. It is recognised that each area is not mutually exclusive and there may be evidence and considerations relevant across workstreams. As such the supplier is expected to work collaboratively across workstreams to share and consider knowledge.



- 5.8 The supplier is also expected to work collaboratively with industry, academia and government bodies and interest groups to collect and research knowledge related to the workstream. It is expected that this will include engaging with officials from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- 5.9 The research will also be used to inform impact assessments for future consultation proposals where evidence suggests changes may be necessary to current statutory guidance.
- 5.10 The main output from the research will be an objective presentation of the results in the form of technical reports.
- 5.11 Each objective, as laid out in the next section, is mandatory. However, the elements described that could contribute to achieving each objective is optional. It is for the supplier to define their approach in their bid and to justify the exclusion of any point in the requirement.

6. THE REQUIREMENT

- 6.1 The requirement for this project has been split across two workstreams, each with distinct objectives. It is expected that the supplier will be able to provide enough resource to deliver the projects objectives according to the milestone delivery timeframe set out in section 7, which may require objectives and tasks to be completed in parallel.
- 6.2 **Workstream A: ADB**
- 6.3 Objective A1: Review and collect up to date evidence on the different trigger thresholds used throughout ADB, including regarding their basis/origin and the underpinning concept. This is expected to include:
- Identification of all trigger thresholds used in ADB.
 - Evidence collection and identification of the origin/basis of trigger thresholds used in ADB.
 - Identification of international examples of relevant regulation and guidance regarding classification of building types and differentiation of fire safety provision requirements.
- 6.4 Objective A2: Review the current trigger thresholds used in ADB considering the available evidence to develop an objective analysis of each triggers with the aim to identify a priority of review. This is expected to include:
- Proposal of an objective analytical approach to review the different classification systems for building types used in ADB and internationally
 - Review of the current system of trigger thresholds and purpose groups used throughout ADB considering the evidence collected.
 - Comparison of the triggers to the ones used internationally.
- 6.5 Objective A3: Review the approach used in ADB to categorise buildings and compare this approach to potential alternatives.



- Review alternative approaches to provide fire safety guidance internationally;
- Develop a robust analytical approach to support review of the current system in ADB.

6.6 Workstream B: Height threshold Ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings.

6.7 Objective B1: Establish and review the evidence base which supports the height threshold for the in-effect ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls of relevant buildings (as defined in Reg 7(4)). This is expected to include:

- Collect evidence and review modern research data on external fire spread and the contribution of external wall construction to fire risk;
- Collect evidence on and review other risk factors that contribute to the risk to life from external fire spread beyond the compartment of origin, in addition to external wall construction; and
- Collect evidence on modern firefighting equipment and operational practice including identification of limitations.

6.8 Objective B2: Develop an appropriate experimental methodology to enable the objective review of the triggers used in the ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings.

6.9 Objective B3: Carry out an objective review of the thresholds (height and building types) used in the ban of combustible materials in and on the external walls of buildings based on the methodology agreed in objective B2.

6.10 The supplier will be expected to establish and manage a technical steering group who will periodically review progress of the project across both sub-workstreams.

6.11 For each workstream, the supplier will be expected to produce:

- A proposed methodology report;
- Interim reports for each objective; and
- A final report summarising findings across each interim report.

6.12 The supplier will be expected to provide ad-hoc advice as requested by the Authority.

7. KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

7.1 The supplier will provide and present to the Authority the following specific deliverables:

- A proposed research methodology consisting of a report (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) detailing the scope of the project, methodology, key deliverables and any preconceived risks.



- Draft interim reports (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) for each phase of the research including methodology, results/findings to date, detailed assumptions intended to underpin analysis along with any other issues identified and how these will be dealt with. Draft reports should also include indications of next steps the supplier will be taking, and any proposed further research not previously agreed with the contract manager. Draft reports should be preceded by a face to face meeting to update the Authority and any relevant groups of stakeholders (e.g. steering group established as part of the research project).
 - Final report (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) including all results/findings throughout the project, detailed assumptions intended to underpin analysis along with any other issues identified. The final report should be preceded by a face to face meeting to update The Authority and any relevant groups of stakeholders (e.g. steering group established as part of the research project).
- 7.2 All reports (draft and final) should include a front cover and Q&A sheet including: the report title, The Authority and supplier reference numbers, the milestone identifier, the version number, the date, and checking/approving signatures. The front should be marked as a draft until an approved final version is requested by The Authority. The front cover may be removed and replaced when reports are prepared for publication by The Authority.
- 7.3 All reports may be published on the gov.uk website after review and quality assurance.
- 7.4 The contractor is expected to produce at the end of the research a publishable report which summarises the findings of the research in a publishable format. This final publishable report should include the findings from all previously issued reports.
- 7.5 Research results/findings should be made available to any established Technical Steering Groups during the project.
- 7.6 The supplier will also be expected to provide a secretariat service for project meetings and meetings of any Technical Steering Groups established, with a record of the minutes being provided to The Authority within three (3) working days of each meeting. Minutes should be provided to The Authority's Contract Manager in an electronic format. The methodology report should propose the number and schedule of these meetings.
- 7.7 The supplier will be expected to update The Authority on progress at least monthly verbally and in writing, through a brief report, to the Contract Manager.
- 7.8 All outputs must be clearly written and thoroughly proof-read prior to submission.
- 7.9 Performance measures:
- Methodology agreed
 - Technical Steering Group established
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- Draft interim reports provided to agreed timeframe
- Final report provided to agreed timeframe
- Satisfactory research output

7.10 The following Contract milestones/deliverables shall apply:

Milestone/Deliverable	Description	Timeframe
1	Commencement date: Start Date	Within 1 week of Contract Award
2	Project methodology agreed	Within 2 weeks of Commencement Date
3	Technical Steering Group established	Within 4 weeks of Contract Award
4	Objective B1 Draft Report provided	Within 4 months of Commencement Date
5	Objective B2 methodology agreed	Within 5 months of Commencement Date
6	Objective A1 Draft Report provided	Within 6 months of Commencement Date
7	Objective A2 Draft Report provided	Within 8 months of Commencement Date
8	Objective B2 Draft Report provided	Within 9 months of Commencement Date
9	Objective A3 Draft Report provided	Within 14 months of Commencement Date
10	Objective B3 Draft Report provided	Within 15 months of Commencement Date
11	Final Draft Publishable report provided.	Within 16 months of Commencement Date.
12	Final Publishable report provided	Within 16 Month of Commencement Date.
12	Contract completion	Within 16 months of Contract Award

8. APPROACH

- 8.1 It is expected that the supplier will propose a robust approach to achieving the objectives laid out in section 6, taking into consideration the evaluation methodology in attachment 2. However, some considerations related to the requirements objectives are discussed below.



- 8.2 Objective A1: It is expected that the Supplier will identify all relevant fire risk factors for the trigger thresholds used throughout ADB and collect evidence regarding these to support robust review of the current approach in ADB and the work to be undertaken in objective A2. For the satisfactory completion of objective A1 the supplier will need to have agreed with the contract manager a reliable strategy to identify the triggers thresholds as well as a research strategy to compare international examples. The following trigger thresholds will be of particular interest, but the project should not be limited to these:
- Maximum depth for increased firefighting requirements in basement;
 - Maximum capacity for single escape route;
 - Maximum height for small single stair buildings;
 - Maximum height for the trigger of increased firefighting provisions;
 - Maximum distance for single way travel distances; and
 - Maximum compartment size;
- 8.3 Objective A2: It is expected that the supplier will produce a working document which includes all the thresholds identified in objective A1 with a priority rating based on an objective assessment of the different triggers. This may take input from the Technical Steering Group or other stakeholder input. However, measures should be taken to ensure that the resulting assessment and prioritisation is objective and accounts for biases. This methodology should be agreed in advance with the contract manager.
- 8.4 Objective A3: It is expected that the successful completion of the objective will include a broad reflection on the way triggers are used in the Approved Document and comparisons with international example. The Supplier will be expected to develop a research strategy to better understand the benefits and limitation of the current system being used and compare it to other alternative.

9. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION/REPORTING

- 9.1 The Authority requires a dedicated account management structure including a single point of contact for day to day enquiries, with a nominated deputy to act in their absence.
- 9.2 A detailed escalation procedure must be outlined, with named individuals outlined on an organogram provided by the supplier.

10. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 10.1 The supplier should present any proposed changes to the project methodology to The Authority during monthly update meetings with the Contract Manager.
- 10.2 Changes to the way in which the Services are to be delivered must be brought to the Authority's attention and agreed prior to any changes being implemented.



11. QUALITY

- 11.1 The supplier should operate under an appropriate quality management system, such as ISO (9000 series) or equivalent.

12. PRICE

- 12.1 Attachment 4 – Price Schedule must be completed. The supplier is expected to provide sufficient detail for evaluation.
- 12.2 The total price for this Contract is expected to be a maximum of £186,000 (excl. VAT) and be completed within 16 months of commencement.
- 12.3 Prices are to be submitted via the e-Sourcing Suite (Attachment 4 – Price Schedule) excluding VAT and including all other expenses relating to Contract delivery.

13. STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 13.1 The Supplier should provide a sufficient level of resource throughout the duration of the Contract in order to consistently deliver a quality service.
- 13.2 The Supplier's staff assigned to the Contract should have the relevant qualifications and experience (i.e. detailed knowledge of the construction industry, construction techniques, technology and design, relating to means of escape and in particular to means of escape for disabled people) to deliver the Contract to the required standard.
- 13.3 The Supplier shall ensure that staff understand the Authority's vision and objectives and will provide excellent customer service to the Authority throughout the duration of the Contract.

14. SERVICE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE

- 14.1 The Authority will measure the quality of the Supplier's delivery by assessing each task, including meeting target dates, appropriateness of methodology, completeness of information and readability of reports. The Authority will take account of the views of any Technical Steering Groups and will provide feedback to the supplier.

KPI/SLA	Service Area	KPI/SLA description	Target
1	Delivery timescales	Completion of milestones to agreed timeframe	100%
2	Research output	Completion of research to satisfactory standard	To be agreed with The Authority
3	Methodology	Proposal and agreement of appropriate methodology	To be agreed with The Authority



- 14.2 The supplier will be required to report regularly on progress toward achievement of objectives. Applicants will need to explain how they will collect and record this information to maintain a fully evidenced audit trail. It should be noted that if a supplier fails to deliver contracted outputs, a performance review may apply which could lead to an early termination of the contract

15. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

- 15.1 There are no requirements for employees of the supplier to have any level of security clearance.
- 15.2 The Authority's office is part of the Home Office building, which has enhanced security arrangements, including baggage searches and photo-ID being needed for entry. The supplier must make allowances for delays caused by security when attending meetings or where the Suppliers staff is working at The Authority's office.

16. PAYMENT AND INVOICING

- 16.1 Payment can only be made following satisfactory delivery of pre-agreed certified deliverables and Milestones.
- 16.2 Before payment can be considered, each invoice must include a detailed elemental breakdown of work completed and the associated costs.
- 16.3 The Purchase Order (PO) number must be included when the Invoice is submitted.
- 16.4 Payment of Invoices follow a process of checking and approval; timeframe is subject to agreement with the Contract Manager.

17. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- 17.1 Feedback of performance will be provided to the contractor at progress meetings and at the end of the project, to ensure the quality of research is maintained.
- 17.2 The Contract Manager for this project will act as the formal point of contact between The Authority and the supplier.
- 17.3 The following will be agreed with the Contract Manager;
- The outputs from the research (presentation, reports etc) and the proposed approach being taken by the suppliers to complete the research.
 - How progress will be fed back to The Authority (including the frequency of face to face progress meetings with the suppliers).
- 17.4 Where outputs will be required and cleared by The Authority, it will be important that the supplier is able to take into consideration the time for The Authority to clear these outputs.
- 17.5 All data and supporting information used in draft or any interim reports and the final report will be provided to The Authority in an electronic format at the end of the contract.



18. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 18.1 This requirement can be undertaken by a single firm or a consortium.
- 18.2 In the case of a consortium, the Authority will only enter into a contract with the lead contractor and all formal contacts between the Authority and members of the consortium should be made through the lead contractor. The lead contractor will be expected to enter into Service Level Agreements (SLA) with consortium members and these members will form part of the Steering Group when it is established.
- 18.3 The supplier agrees to take out a policy of 'Professional Indemnity Insurance' with a capped liability level of 125% of the contract value.

19. LOCATION

- 19.1 The location of the Services will be carried out generally at the Suppliers offices, although there may be a need for some tasks to be undertaken at the Authority's office (currently 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF).