



17.02.1110 Cloud Software Engineering Partner - Request for clarification

1. Overview

The Planning Inspectorate, who are based in Bristol, is part way through its Operational Delivery Transformation (ODT) project which is responsible for providing a new end-to-end digital solution to improve our customer experience and deliver an array of benefits. The project is currently operating as a standalone entity, with links into the Digital Services Team.

The Digital Services Team are positioned in the Corporate Services Directorate. In the last few years, the team has built its capacity and capability to enable the Inspectorate to become a more digitally able organisation and manage the ODT solution when it transitions into the live environment.

The Planning Inspectorate requires a supplier that can provide the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to help modernise and manage cloud services for Digital & Data Services, on a range of internal and public facing services from discovery to live.

Individual statements of work (SoW) will be agreed and aligned to discrete run and maintain needs and backlog delivery phases. Our digital needs are evolving as part of wider planning reforms, but the service is required to support our journey of modernising our planning solutions to the cloud building on the new and existing services. This is also in the context of a move to a service oriented operating model for Digital and Data Services and the continued run, maintain and transformation needs of a number of the Inspectorate's end-to-end services including Appeals, Applications, Examinations including the Back Office case management and underpinning Operational Data Warehouse.

The Inspectorate has completed a search on G-Cloud 12¹ and has reviewed Kin + Carta Partnerships Ltd's service offering. We have some clarification questions (in section 5) and ask that you provide a response by **4pm 21st November 2022**.

¹ Words used for search: Azure, Node.js, Scalable and Outcomes



2. Deliverables

1. Cloud Software Engineering Partner

About the Work

Why the work is being done:

- The Planning Inspectorate deals with planning appeals in England. The operational delivery transformation programme (ODT) is transforming the Inspectorate's end-to-end appeals, applications, and examinations management to:
 - a. Make it easier and quicker for our customers to do business with us;
 - b. Support our staff to work as efficiently and effectively as possible;
 - c. Maximise the use of digital and data opportunities in line with both planning reform policy and the Planning Inspectorate's strategy and business plans;
 - d. Replace legacy systems and develop new platforms which will improve efficiency and better meet user needs;
 - e. Improve data and performance through better information and decision support, improved insights from data, track performance and progress of the Inspectorate's digital services, as well as improved data flows across the end-to-end planning process.
- This contract will allow ongoing managed cloud run and maintain services alongside time-critical work on the existing backlog on Appeals, Applications, Back Office and Operational Data Warehouse services to be supported whilst the building of in-house capability and the transfer of skills and knowledge to civil servants.

Problem to be solved

The current planning processes which involve the Planning Inspectorate take too long, can be confusing for users and are inefficient.

The Planning Inspectorate needs access to managed cloud services that can build and maintain the software element of our technology products, integrating with multi-disciplinary and (typically) agile service teams.

Due to the variety of technologies and user needs a flexible approach is required to allow Statements of Work to be appropriate for any given.

Common to all of our projects will be to implement changes which are:

- Accessible and aligned to user needs
- Can be built and maintained more cost-effectively, including better in-house support and delivery
- Enables a data driven organisation
- Allows a more rapid iteration of our digital and data products and services.

Who the users are and what they need to do

As a citizen, I need to know my options when going through the different planning stages and processes, so that the process is fast, clear and efficient

As a Local Planning Authority, I am able to engage with the Inspectorate through the different planning stages and processes, so that the process is fast, clear and efficient

As an Inspector, I need to have the relevant information in order to make decisions quickly and efficiently, and in accordance with the regulations



The Planning Inspectorate

As a Digital Services team, I need to design, build and run digital services, so that they meet user needs

As a Data and Performance team, I need to develop data services that provide information and decision support, discovery insights, share knowledge and track performance.

As a DLUHC digital planning reform team, I need a planning system that is transparent and accountable and that can interact with the wider planning system technologies

Any work that's already been done

The Appeal a Planning Decision Service and the Planning Applications Service is approaching public beta stage, with significant development complete on both services. The Back Office Casework Management System is also being developed and will be completing its first major release to support Applications casework by the end of FY 22/23. The Operational Data Warehouse is also in development and will be completing its first major release to support Appeals, Applications, and the Back Office services. These will require run and maintain support as part of a managed cloud service.

There are a number of other projects at various stages of development, as well as a range of existing services at various stages of their life cycle e.g. legacy to new. Suppliers will be briefed relative to specific statements of work.

Existing team

The Digital and Data teams have a number of permanent staff across most of the government's DDaT capability framework, supplemented by contractors.

The incumbent provider has been delivering the Appeal a Planning Decision Service, Applications Service and Back Office Case Management Service. Additionally, we have an existing Digital Partner contract who we are able to call on for resourcing support.

We expect flexibility in any proposed service and financial model to replace supplier team members with internal team members during the period of the contract.

Where required collaboration with other suppliers may be necessary. This contract will not prevent us from using other commercial arrangements, including using capability contracts, to pull together a team from a range of suppliers.

Work Setup

Address where the work will take place

In normal circumstances, the supplier would be required to work alongside the Digital Services and Data teams in Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN.

However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have adopted hybrid working for all team members with team communications made using Microsoft Teams and other collaborative working tools such as Jira and SharePoint. Other tools will be used at the Inspectorate's discretion.

Working arrangements

A flexible approach is required to meet the needs of each individual project and programme. The work will be divided into Statements of Work (SOWs) which will clearly identify the working arrangements.

We anticipate a maximum of 3-5 concurrent Statements of Work.



Security clearance

The Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) clearance will be required to access the Planning Inspectorate's technology systems and offices; however, in some specific roles, Security Check (SC) will be required.

Additional information

Additional terms and conditions

All expenses must be pre-agreed with between the parties and must comply with the Planning Inspectorate's travel and subsistence policy.

Travel/expenses to the primary site in Temple Quay House, Bristol BS1 6PN will not be reimbursed by the Planning Inspectorate. Any other expenses, such as travel to other sites, must be agreed in advance in line with the Planning Inspectorates own expenses policy, and be included as part of the contract.

Pricing Options - Fixed Price and Capped Time and Materials

The supplier will be expected to work with full transparency and using a performance dashboard, where metrics/SLA's/KPI's will be agreed at contract award.

This will be operated as a service contract and therefore outside of IR35.

The supplier will be expected to support a full handover to the successful bidder of a planned future managed cloud run and maintain service scheduled during the life of this contract.

3. Service Features and experience

This section sets out the essential and nice-to-have criteria.

Service Features

Essential features and experience

- **Managed cloud services** – Run and maintain support of the following technologies:
 - Appeals, Applications and Back Office
 - Nunjucks has been chosen to deliver the front-end capability for the user experience. This technology provides straightforward HTML templating and has been selected over other technologies (such as Vue.js, React.js and Angular.js) as the required front-end development has more complexity than could be easily supported in a Single Page Application (SPA) and it provides us with the degree of flexibility and component reusability. It is also a very reliable and up to date technology with a popular user community across government. We have inherited the official GDS templates where possible. This is as it is very reliable and the modern javascript library is widely used across government and wider industry. We use the official GDS node.js library <https://github.com/alphagov/govuk-frontend>
 - Express is a Node.js framework – used in combination with Node this framework enables SSR (Server-side rendering)



which delivers pages as plain HTML, meeting the objective of progressive enhancement and delivering the basic functionality in the absence of JavaScript. Node.js is used widely across Government.

- Node has been used to develop the microservices and backend API integration elements of the new services into the Operational Data Warehouse.
- We have selected a front-end technical stack which enables it to easily utilise the GOV.UK Design System and take advantage of the continual updates to the system. This supports the accessibility of the forms and provide a consistent cross- Government user experience with the tried and tested patterns available through the design system.
- Links to Planning Inspectorate public repositories: - <https://github.com/Planning-Inspectorate/appeal-planning-decision> <https://github.com/Planning-Inspectorate/applications-service>
- List of technologies in use:-



Technology	Used For
Nunjucks	Templating HTML/CSS
Express.js	App Service
Node.js	Javascript Runtime
Pino	Logging
Cypress	Automated UI Testing
Jest	Unit Testing
Cucumber	BDD testing/API testing
Axe	Accessibility Testing
Zap	Security Testing
GitHub	Source Control
Azure DevOps (YAML pipelines)	CI/CD pipeline
Terraform	Infrastructure as Code
Terragrunt	Terraform enhancement
Azure App Service	App hosting
Azure Front Door	Load balancing/WAF
Docker	Containerisation
Semantic Release	Automated Version Numbering
Azure Monitor	Monitoring/alerting/logging
Azure Defender	Vulnerability scanning/threat protection
Clam AV	Anti-virus



- **Operational Data Warehouse**

- To support the new digital planning services (Appeals, Applications, Examinations and Back Office) within the Inspectorate user community, as well as external users.

Technology	Used For
Synapse Pipelines	Data orchestration
Azure Data Lake Storage Gen2	Underlying storage and data lake capability
Synapse Spark Pools	Spark processing capability
Synapse Serverless SQL Pools	Direct and on demand process and service capability
Synapse Dedicated SQL Pools	Performant T-SQL based analytics
Data Shares	Optional on demand snapshots of data to business applications and analytics users
Data Explorer Pools	Performant indexing and querying of time-series analytics data
Key Vault	Secure storage and management within each Data Landing Zone
Power BI	Create dashboards and serve data to users
Azure Monitor	Metrics across Azure resources
Azure DevOps	CI/CD pipeline

- **Cloud modernisation** – support the move of legacy systems and data to the Inspectorate's Microsoft Azure cloud infrastructure.
- **Cloud migration** – migrate legacy systems and data to the Inspectorate's Microsoft Azure cloud infrastructure
- **Cloud adoption and enablement** – support and enable the Inspectorate in any wider activities that support cloud adoption of its services
- **Cross-functional teams** – Anticipated typical cloud transformation teams would include Principal Developer, Lead Engineers, Senior Developers, Test Engineers, DevOps Engineers and Developers (SFIA 3to5), User Researchers, Interaction Designers and Content Designers (SFIA 3to5), as well as Business Analysts and Delivery Managers (SFIA 3to5), Data Science (SFIA3to5), Data Architect (SFIA 4 to 6), Data Engineer (SFIA 3to5) and Performance Analyst (SFIA 3to4) into agile delivery teams in government and understanding how those roles work together.
- Demonstrable and recent (within the last 2 years) experience of leading or supporting managed cloud services alongside software delivery of a feature backlog.
- Demonstrable and recent (within the last 2 years) experience of leading technical delivery and providing evidence of delivering software development capability support in accordance with need.
- Demonstrable and recent experience of working in multidisciplinary/multi-organisation teams using Agile-methodology (in a product-centric manner), operating in sprints, aligning development activities with parallel work-streams



teams, ensuring coding standards and relevant GDS and government standards are maintained.

- Evidence demonstrating how you have ensured compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (including your ICO registration number if applicable), IR35 and other policies/procedures when delivering an outcome.
- **User and Service Support** – 2nd and 3rd line support, covering 24/7 depending on the service, using both in-team DevOps enabled support and dedicated service desk.

Nice-to-have service features and experience

- Experience managing portfolios of technical work in a multiple supplier environment
- Demonstrable and recent (within the last 2 years) experience of transitioning services to another supplier or internal team.

4. Contract duration

The contract will be for 12-months, from approx. 3rd April 2023 until 2nd April. The Planning Inspectorate may extend the contract for up to 12-months, subject to business need and performance of the service.

5. Clarification questions

Please provide a response to the following questions by 4pm 21st November 2022 to: tenders@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

GDPR

1. Please provide details of the policies and procedures for your organisation detailing how you ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, including your ICO registration number if applicable.

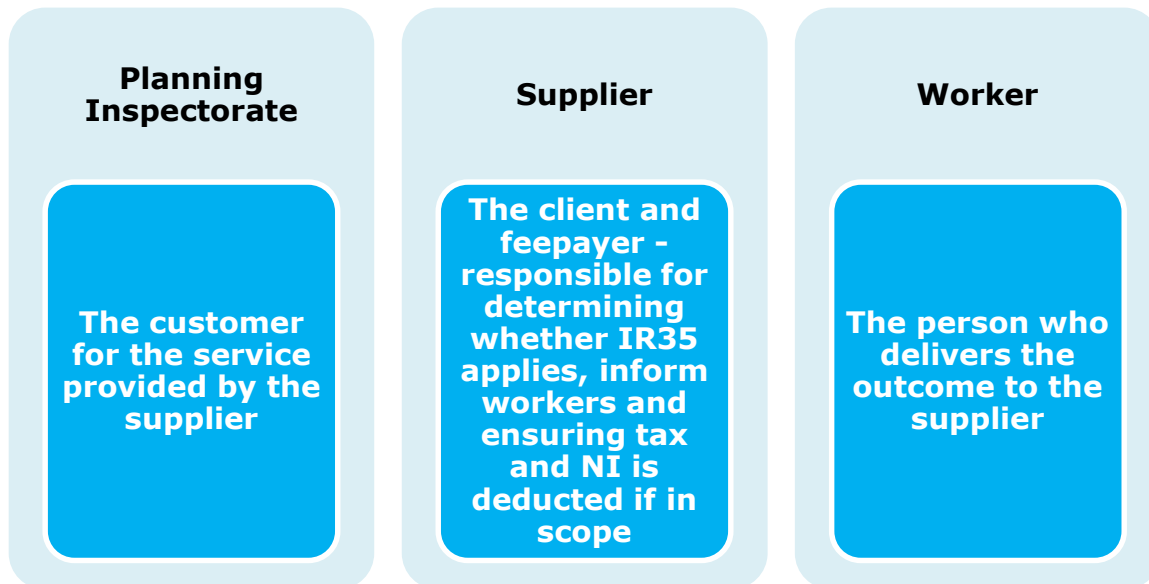
IR35

2. Following the review of all available evidence, on balance, the Inspectorate will contract out a whole service to the successful supplier. Workers will not be personally providing their services to us. The supplier will have responsibility for delivering the project/s and will control the work performed by the workers. The supplier will be the party most akin to the employer and will be directly benefitting from the workers' labour. The Inspectorate will be benefitting from the provision of a service provided by the successful supplier. The successful supplier will need to determine the IR35 status of the workers, issue a status determination statement to the workers and is responsible for PAYE if the engagements are determined to be inside the rules by them.



The Planning Inspectorate

The contractual relationship, for IR35 is as follows:



In accordance with the above, please can you advise of the policies and procedures your organisation has in place to determine and assure the agreement will be outside of IR35.

Intellectual Property Rights

3. Please confirm that all Intellectual Property generated as a result of this contract will remain the property of PINS at no additional cost to the Customer. For the avoidance of doubt all intellectual property owned by either party prior to the signing of the agreement remains the property of the other party.

Technical Clarification

4. Please can you clarify which specific Microsoft Azure technologies you can support?

Resource/Rates

5. Please provide details of:
 - 5.1 your resource plan that enables the allocation of staff for the fulfilment of a Statement of Work?
 - 5.2 how you recruit resource? E.g., existing employees, case by case etc.
 - 5.3 Lead times to being in any required resources?
6. Please advise if the resource to be utilised on this contract will be employees of your organisation, subcontracted or hybrid of the 2?
 - 6.1 If a subcontractor is to be utilised, please advise which services they provide.
 - 6.2 In the event of a subcontractor resource being utilised please provide confirmation that all liability remains with your organisation.



7. SFIA RATES: Please can you advise how you determine the level or the experience of the contractor you put forward for tasks detailed within a Statement of Work to be delivered?

Contract Commencement

8. Please provide confirmation when you will be able to commence work on the contract noting that the latest day can be 3rd April 2023.

6. Procurement timescales

The timescales for the procurement are provided below. If you are unable to meet any of the dates, please contact tenders@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Activity	Date
Request for clarification issued	18 November 2022
Response to clarification deadline	4pm 21 st November 2022
Award of contract/CCS G-Cloud 12 Order form placed	23 rd November 2022
Start date	Approx. 3 rd April 2023