

Cabinet

Report Title	Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures 2025 to 2029'
Date of Meeting	March 11 2026
Report Author	Robert Hodgson – Engineer – Highways Assets
Lead Officer	Alan Lunt - Executive Director - Place
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Keith Allcock - Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways
Why is this a key decision?	To result in the council incurring expenditure which exceeds that included in any approved revenue or capital budget or the limits set out within an approved borrowing or investment strategy and was not the subject of specific grant
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Open
Is the report urgent?	No
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	Not applicable
Appendices (if any)	None

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to enter into a joining agreement and use the new Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures 2025 to 2029 (three years with one-year possible extension), in collaboration with Wolverhampton City Council, Coventry City Council and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Solihull and Walsall.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place to enter a joining agreement to use the Framework Contract for Works to Highway Structures 2025 to 2029 for a period of up to three years with one-year possible extension until 30 November 2029 in collaboration with Wolverhampton City Council, Coventry City Council and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Solihull and Walsall;
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Director - Governance (Monitoring Officer) to be authorised to take all actions necessary to implement the recommendation at 2.1 above.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to utilise the new Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures 2025 to 2029 (three years with one-year possible extension) in collaboration with Wolverhampton City Council, Coventry City Council and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Solihull and Walsall.
- 3.2 The benefits derived from the procurement of this regional framework contract will include delivery of projects necessary to improve and maintain structures in a cost effective, timely and efficient manner.
- 3.3 All participants in this framework contract will be able to achieve cost savings through economies of scale and additional benefits through the reduction in tendering costs, reduced contract administration and securing social value benefits.
- 3.4 The scope of the framework agreement includes maintenance of highway structures associated with improving and protecting the highway network infrastructure. The works will be for maintenance of structures including tasks on the following types of structure, including but not limited to:
 - Highway over bridges
 - Highway under bridges (over roads, canals, watercourses, and disused railways)
 - Footbridges (over roads, canals, watercourses, and disused railways)
 - Subways
 - Retaining Walls
 - Culverts
 - Fences and safety barriers
 - Any other highway-associated structures

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 **Option 1 – Not to establish a Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures.** Without a framework contract to enable the quick and efficient appointment of contractors to deliver programmes of work, each project would require a separate, costly, and time-consuming tender and

procurement process. In addition, Highway Services would be required to rely on elements of other, less appropriate framework contracts to meet urgent service needs. This would inevitably result in delays to the delivery of infrastructure maintenance and improvement works on the authority's structures assets, increased costs, and potential reputational risk. For these reasons, this option is not recommended.

5. Consultation

5.1 There is no statutory consultation required for this procurement. Internal consultation was undertaken with Procurement, Legal Services and Finance in the preparation of this report and with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways. Comments received are reflected in the text of the report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Works undertaken utilising the Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures will be funded through annual revenue allocations, capital budgets and specific grants in relation to highways maintenance or improvement works and no additional funding is sought or implied.

6.2 Contractors are required to have the relevant and current accreditation and certification required to work on the public highway. Contractors are expected to have the required skill set and range of experienced staff available, at sufficient numbers and levels, to cover the range of activities needed to efficiently carry out all the different types of work as described in the framework. The Framework Agreement will comprise of 2 Lots:

- Lot 1 for package orders up to £100,000
- Lot 2 for package orders between £100,001 and £500,000.

6.3 Wolverhampton City Council is leading the procurement process which has been undertaken collaboratively amongst the participating authorities.

6.4 The anticipated annual spend through the contract for Sandwell Council would be circa £1.2m. However, this may fluctuate depending on the allocations received through the various funding streams. The figures for the proposed contract award below are the annual and total value of the whole framework across all participating authorities.

Proposed Contract Award	
Contract duration	Four years (3 + 1)
Contract commencement date	1 st December 2025
Annual value	£5,000,000
Total value	£20,000,000

7. Legal and Governance Implications

7.1 The council as a Highway Authority has a statutory duty under s.41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain public highways. S.328(2) of the Highways Act 1980 vests a bridge or structure as part of the highway and the normal duty to maintain under s.41 of the 1980 Act applies

- 7.2 Where appropriate, legal services will support and provide advice in respect of the various projects as and when they become operational in respect of matters arising under the Highways Act 1980.
- 7.3 It is proposed that up to seven suitable contractors will be appointed to each lot to ensure that adequate resources are available to undertake all the required highway work across the relevant authorities, during the period of the framework.
- 7.4 The Framework Contract commenced on December 1 2025, initially for a three-year period up to November 30 2028, with an option to extend for an additional 12 months, subject to satisfactory performance and budget availability.

8. Risks

- 8.1 There are no specific risk or resources implications from entering into the Framework. The Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures will be used to support the delivery of the statutory duties from approved capital programmes, revenue budgets and grants.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 The requirements of equality and diversity in relation to this framework are included in the contract to draw attention to the details of, and the requirement to comply with them.

10. Other Relevant Implications

- 10.1 **Health and Wellbeing.** The Highway environment plays an important role in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from social inclusion and interaction. The procurement of this Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures will help ensure that the highway network is maintained in a safe and reliable condition for all to use.
- 10.2 **Social Value.** The procurement of this framework provides us with the opportunity to share best practice, improve our performance and make efficiency savings by working collaboratively together with other participating authorities. Sandwell believes that the effective use of local, smaller or medium sized contractors unlocks significant benefits for the residents of Sandwell that goes beyond the first-order project derived value for money benefits, by making more holistic use of the economic funds available to us to compliment the Council's wider drivers to tackle poverty, inequality and lack of opportunities within the Borough. The successful suppliers' offerings in respect of social value have been assessed as part of the tender evaluation process of this framework. The successful suppliers include a mix of local businesses, supplying employment opportunities for local people and larger contractors. All contractors have committed to providing social value opportunities in the local area.

- 10.3 **Climate Change.** Works undertaken utilising the Framework Contract for Works to Highways Structures will support maintaining structures in a safe and reliable condition, prolonging the life of assets and where possible, reducing the need for more carbon intensive, disruptive and costly replacement works.
- 10.4 **Corporate Parenting.** Highways play a major role in the highway infrastructure works particularly in maintaining the network in a safe and reliable condition, promoting the wellbeing of children and young people. The contractors participating in this contract have committed to supporting local young people into employment, through initiatives such as offering apprenticeships, undertaking school visits, conducting workshops or providing work experience opportunities.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None.

12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

- 12.1 The proposals in this report support delivery against the following strategic themed objectives:

- **Growing up in Sandwell.** Well maintained, safe and reliable highway infrastructure will encourage walking and cycling among our younger people to improve their health and wellbeing and promote cleaner air quality. The use of local contractors and suppliers will directly and indirectly provide work opportunities for local young people, through apprenticeships, jobs and work experience.
- **Living in Sandwell.** Good quality highway infrastructure will make our communities feel safe, more protected and confident in their homes and neighborhoods. Whilst also ensuring the borough's structural assets are well maintained to support resilience of the councils highway network and local economy.
- **Healthy in Sandwell.** A safe and well-maintained highway environment plays an important role in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from health, independence, social inclusion and interaction.
- **Thriving Economy in Sandwell.** Our local highways are the arteries of our communities. They connect our residents with employment, education, local services and the wider world. They enable economic growth, social mobility and are vital in ensuring a thriving economy. Whilst also providing a positive environment where businesses and our community are supported to grow, investment in the borough is maximised and job opportunities are created for residents.

To be completed if you do not need an Equality Impact Assessment.

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area:

Service Lead

Date:

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service that you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No