

## **Audit Committee; 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Statement of Response**

There are a number of ongoing and historic issues and failures along the A466 from St Arvans to Bigsweir Bridge which have required various repairs and monitoring to ensure the safety of the carriageway users. Since 2012 we have been using Parsons Brinkerhoff (WSP) as part of the Consultancy Framework Service and when a 250m length of carriageway started to move and crack in the winter of 2015/16 they were involved in providing geotechnical advice, investigation and monitoring of the failure. Temporary lights were installed as a safety precaution until this section of road was reconstructed and made safe towards the end of 2016. Due to the deep seated failure mechanism of the slope supporting the highway the repairs undertaken were only meant as a temporary short term measure and a more permanent solution may be required. This would take the form of realigning the highway into the hillside and founding this on more stable ground for which we would require suitable Geotechnical Investigation works to allow the design of the highway and associated slope stability works on excavated cut slopes. Considering the ongoing involvement and detailed knowledge of the consultant, for continuity, on this occasion it was felt appropriate to carry on with the services of WSP for this particular scheme.

The site is bounded by the lower Wye Valley SSSI and SAC and as such would need detailed cooperation with National Resources Wales (NRW) and various protected species licences to enable investigation works to be undertaken. The proposed fees for arranging the site investigation contract/tender, the necessary ecological surveys, liaising with NRW and producing the Geotechnical interpretation report etc. was £57,940.

In September 2016 the Consultancy Framework ended and was replaced by the National Procurement Service. While there is a direct award option up to £25K, as the proposed investigation works were £57K and we would like continuity on this occasion a request was made for exemption from compliance with contract procedure rules (attached)

Once all the necessary approvals and consents were granted the investigations were carried out over the period Sept/Oct 2017.

Stephen Baldwin

Project Engineer (Structures), Highway & Flood Management

Monmouthshire County Council