

Report of Head of Service, Museums and Galleries

Report to Chief Officer Culture and Sport

Date: 2.08.17

Subject: MYLearning.org website redevelopment

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| Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Summary of main issues

1. The MYLearning.org (MYL) website is a very well used national teaching resource. Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) is funded to provide it through a grant from Arts Council England.
2. The current website was built on a bespoke platform 12 years ago urgently needs to be transferred to a more modern site in order to meet the expectations of users. The migration of the current content to the new site is a complex task. The developer who built the original bespoke site is now an employee of Grapple, the contractor already tasked with developing the wire frames for the new website.
3. As per the Council's financial procedures, LMG seeks a waiver of Corporate Procurement Rules to directly appoint Grapple for the full development of the new website, including the transfer of content, for completion in March 2018.
4. The total cost is £81,600, to be funded completely from the Arts Council grant. The detailed costs, which are business sensitive, are presented in the confidential attachment.

Recommendations

5. The Chief Officer Culture and Sport is recommended to agree a waiver of Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurements (Quotations) to allow for the appointment of a contractor to carry out the redevelopment of the MyLearning website and migration of all content from the existing site to the new one.

The contract shall commence on the 7 August 2017 and expire on the 31 March 2018 with the option to extend for a period of 3 months.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To agree the financing of the redevelopment of the MyLearning website.

2. Background information

2.1 Background to MYLearning.org:

- 2.1.1 MYLearning.org is a national teacher's resource website with over one million unique hits per year. It is managed by LMG and hosts contributions from over 150 museums nationwide, with over 400 National Curriculum linked resources, based on museums, arts and cultural collections.
- 2.1.2 The website was founded 12 years ago with Museums, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA) Renaissance in the Regions funding, and was initially managed by Museums Sheffield. When the Renaissance funding stream ceased, Museums Sheffield did not have the capacity to continue the management, and the website transferred to LMG in 2011.
- 2.1.3 LMG manages the website using Arts Council England funding. There is an ambition for it to become self-sustaining within the next five years. The development of MYL is part of a grant agreement with the Arts Council. This reflects the Arts Council's focus on children and young people accessing arts and culture through digital learning, and its requirement for LMG to focus on national leadership within the Museums sector.
- 2.1.4 Teachers know, use and trust the existing website for resources and content as confirmed by extensive, national teacher consultation at regular intervals over the last 12 years.
- 2.1.5 MYL is now also expecting to deliver the 'Leeds Curriculum' whereby Leeds-based narratives and teaching resources can specifically align with the national curriculum across a range of subject areas. This scheme also has the potential to develop similar applications worldwide (linked to Capital of Culture 2023).

2.2 Developing the website

- 2.2.1 The website has not been updated either in design or functionality for 12 years. It looks outdated and doesn't perform as teachers expect in a social media savvy, search ability driven, competitive age. Through consultation with local Leeds teachers, we know that the look, feel and functionality are driving away traffic.
- 2.2.2 It is also no longer technologically supported and is not fully secure, so is vulnerable to malicious attack. In cases of malicious attack, the site needs to be taken offline in order to restore functionality and this has a detrimental effect on the service.
- 2.2.3 The current website does not have the functionality to host the Leeds Curriculum.

2.3 Progress to date

- 2.3.1 Grapple was contracted to conduct teacher consultation and wire framing of a new website in March 2017. This was completed in June 2017, and the wire frames are in place on open source software (Wordpress).
- 2.3.2 The completion of the wire framing then allowed for accurate costings for full development of the site, including transfer of content.

3. Main issues

- 3.1.1 The original developer, is now working with the web development agency, Grapple. He built the current website, and most of the interactive aspects such as games. The current website is not built on open source software. It is a bespoke platform designed by the developer.
- 3.1.2 The new website will be a completely new build. However, a very large amount of content on the current website needs to migrate over to the new website. A developer will write scripts that move data from the current website to the new website (whilst maintaining Google rankings). Because Grapple understands the bespoke coding of the current website, this will be a relatively straightforward process for the company.
- 3.1.3 Grapple is the best positioned company to take forward the MYL development. The company has the knowledge of the existing website to enable a smooth migration, and has also worked with other major clients whose working approaches are similar.
- 3.1.4 LMG is committed to the Arts Council to redevelop the site within the current funding round which ends in March 2018. Grapple can deliver a website to user testing and soft launch stage within this time frame.
- 3.1.5 In addition to the issues of expertise outlined above, a full tendering process severely risks the ability to meet our commitment to ACE which is funding the work through a grant to LMG. Soft market testing has suggested the quotation is reasonable.
- 3.1.6 MYL is a national teaching resource, not just a Leeds based resource. (Leeds City Council ICT department was unable to take on MYL in 2011, and has indicated it is not in a position to determine capability to undertake the work required, meet budget and timescale. It would potentially have similar migration issues to any other developer taking on a bespoke system).

3.2 Consequences if the proposed action is not approved:

A full tendering process would mean:

- Failing to achieve our ACE commitments in a timely manner
- Not having a system in place to deliver the Leeds Curriculum to deadline (for soft launch in June 2018);
- Lost income opportunities through offering to host other local curriculums;
- Potentially missing our allotted timeslot with Grapple;
- Greater potential costs and a longer timescale with a different company as it works to migrate from the bespoke platform.
- Loss of website traffic, and partner relationships, due to the lack of functionality on current website.

4.0 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1 LMG has engaged in rigorous consultation with teachers and young people to make sure that the content of the website is fit for purpose. This occurs on a rolling, continuous basis through conversations, email feedback, and surveys.
- 4.2 The initial idea of redevelopment came from teacher feedback from the teacher's panel in 2015 and from other teachers around the country.
- 4.3 The recommendation in this report was discussed and agreed at the Directorate Management Team.
- 4.4 The Executive Member for Economy & Culture and the Head of Digital Change (ICT) have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal.

5.0 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 5.1 When MYL was first developed, extensive user testing was conducted during the pre-launch stage, especially with people with disabilities, such as visual impairment. This will also be part of the new developments and is within the current proposed schedule of work.
- 5.2 All the content is checked via the Digital Learning Officer for access (so, all audio and films are transcribed) and for diverse content so that it is representative of audiences. Resources are co-produced with communities to ensure diverse developments.
- 5.3 LMG monitors and evaluates accessibility, equality and diversity, and will continue to do this within the new developments.

6.0 Council policies and best council plan

- 6.1 The MYL website represents Leeds taking on national leadership within the arena of cultural learning, and putting young people's experiences at the heart of developments. It will showcase our resilient communities, promote a vibrant city for growth and will be the hosting mechanism for the Leeds Curriculum.

7.0 Resources and value for money

- 7.1 On the basis of the considerations above the direct appointment of Grapple is recommended as the best way to achieve value for money.
- 7.2 Soft market testing indicates other companies would be in line with these development costs, but also have additional cost on top in terms of re-wire framing, and the costs associated to migrating from a bespoke platform.
- 7.3 Funding will come solely from a grant from Arts Council England.

7.4 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 7.4.1 No additional legal implications have been identified.

7.5 Risk management

- 7.6.1 The only identified risk is that another company could challenge the lack of tender. However, this risk is balanced with the rationale above.
- 7.6.2 LMG will implement a robust contract to ensure Grapple delivers the project on time, on budget and to a high standard.

7.6. Conclusions

- 7.6 Grapple is the best placed company to deliver a new MYL website. It has the relevant experience and knowledge of the current bespoke site, the time and therefore presents best value.
- 7.7 A tendering process could also lead to time delays and appointing another company could bring large associated costs.
- 7.8 Having considered the options of a tendering process, or a waiver for the CPR to directly appoint Grapple, and the associated risks, a direct appointment of Grapple for the redevelopment of the MYL website is recommended.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 The Chief Officer Culture and Sport is recommended to agree a waiver of Contracts Procedure Rule No 8.1 and 8.2 – Intermediate Value Procurements (Quotations) to allow for the appointment of a contractor to carry out the redevelopment of the MyLearning website and migration of all content from the existing site to the new one. The contract shall commence on 7 August 2017 and expire on the 31 March 2018 with the option to extend for a period of 3 months such option not to be taken up more than 3 months.

9.0 Background documents¹

- 9.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.