

**Report of Head of Museums and Galleries**

**Report to Chief Officer Resources and Strategy**

**Date: 7th August 2017**

**Subject: New Exhibition Case for the Childhood Gallery at Abbey House Museum**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):Kirkstall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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:  Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Leeds Museums and Galleries have funding from Arts Council England through the Major Partner Museum programme which is to be used for a range of programmes including enhancing permanent galleries and exhibitions. We propose to purchase a large new display case from the supplier, Click Netherfield, as part of a phased refurbishment and refresh of the Childhood Gallery displays at Abbey House Museum. The proposal is to replace a wooden display cabinet which no longer provides adequate security or flexibility for changing displays. The new cases will also be interchangeable with other cases we have on site, both at Abbey House Museum and the new ones installed in the refreshed Visitor Centre at Kirkstall Abbey and across other community spaces in the service and so will help provide a flexible stock of cases for exhibitions in the future. This supplier provided our existing stock of cases and display furniture, and the system is such that parts are interchangeable and configurable to offer maximum flexibility of use as well as visual consistency. The value of the order is £18,447 excluding VAT and it is proposed that the order might be placed without seeking tenders from other suppliers.
2. It will bring this part of the gallery up to the level of object security that we require for bringing loans in and for displaying high-value collections. It means there is a consistency of quality in our displays across the service.
3. Tenders from competitive suppliers have been sought in the past and Click Netherfield were selected based on price, quality of construction and materials, quality of service and flexibility of the system – in that the cases are configurable and therefore minimise the need for a greater number of units. There has been no expansion in the market for cases since the previous tender took place. The prices offered by the proposed

supplier now were in line (allowing for inflation and any other materials costs) with those tendered for previously.

## **Recommendations**

4. The Chief Officer Resources and Strategy is recommended to approve a waiver of the Intermediate Value Procurement Rule to allow for the purchase of new display cabinets at Abbey House Museum, at a value of £ 18,447.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide information on the proposed purchase of a display case for Leeds Museums and Galleries from a supplier without undergoing a tendering process and gain approval for proceeding.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The current Childhood Gallery was installed in 2000 and has remained largely unchanged for 17 years and some elements are now tired (and some no longer function as intended). A phased refurbishment of the gallery is in the Abbey House site development plan. The existing display case is inflexible and lacks basic security and environmental controls. The proposed new display case will provide a dramatic climax to the end of the gallery and allow a greater number and variety of objects to be displayed.
- 2.2 The improved case will allow us to continue with a programme to refresh our permanent displays on a more regular basis, attracting new and repeat visitors from the local area and will also enable us to increase the quality of these exhibitions to meet Arts Council England's Goals of Excellence and Participation. It will lead to an improved visitor experience. The display will also tie into the national curriculum (toys through time). We will ensure a wider range of toys is displayed that relate to visitors of all generations.
- 2.3 The cases can also be used flexibly to complement the other cases supplied by the same supplier and installed at Kirkstall Abbey Visitor Centre and existing cases in Abbey House Museum.

### **3. Main Issues**

#### **3.1 Reason for Contract Procedure Rules Waiver/Invocation**

We wish to add to our existing stock of demountable display cases. Buying a different brand defeats the purpose of a demountable system as they would not be compatible with our existing stock.

Value for money is sought here by adding to existing display case stock, rather than introducing new and incompatible elements. A good example here is that the lighting systems are interchangeable between cases and because we are buying more of the same system we have no need to buy as many lighting boxes. If we

were to buy from an alternative supplier we would have to buy lighting rigs for each unit at significant additional cost.

## **4. Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Where these cases have been used in our sites to date they have been well received. It must be remembered that these are items of display furniture and their job is to protect the items within, presenting them in the best possible light whilst being unobtrusive to the visitor experience. Those displays and exhibitions where such cases are used are well received by our visitors and we have had no complaints about the display furniture. It is not intended that we would extend consultation further than this in this case. We also do not wish to differentiate between the quality and security of cases for our own collections and 'loans-in' whether from other museums or from the community. One of the most positive responses from partners is the commitment LMG has to taking care of community loans and showcasing them to a high standard.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 Modern cases like these provide the best possible physical access to the displayed objects. They are designed in order that wheelchair users are able to view items easily and comfortably. Using these cases allows us to phase out the use of our old stock of cases which are considerably less accessible and do not provide adequate conditions for the items within.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 Spending Money Wisely. The cost of this case is being recovered by funding from Arts Council England Major Partner Museum programme.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 We believe this is the most cost effective solution.

4.4.2 Tenders from competitive suppliers have been sought in the past and Click Netherfield were selected based on price, quality of construction and materials, quality of service and flexibility of the system – in that the cases are configurable and therefore minimise the need for a greater number of units.

4.4.3 There has been no expansion in the market for cases since the previous tender took place.

4.4.4 The prices offered by the proposed supplier now were in line (allowing for inflation and any other materials costs) with those tendered for previously.

4.4.5 Value for money is sought here by adding to existing display case stock, rather than introducing new and incompatible elements. A good example here is that the lighting systems are interchangeable between cases and because we are buying more of the same system we have no need to buy as many lighting boxes. If we

were to buy from an alternative supplier we would have to buy lighting rigs for each unit at considerable additional cost.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 The Chief Procurement Officer has previously advised that it would be lawful for the Council to waive Contracts Procedure Rule, Intermediate Value Procurement in these circumstances, provided that the Chief Officer of Culture and Sport is satisfied that there are compelling reasons to do so.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 The supplier has a proven track record with us and has already supplied high quality products to the service to budget, to time and to the standard we require.

#### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The purchase of these cases from a proven supplier, which are compatible with existing stock in the service represents the best value for money and will provide our visitors with a high quality visitor experience.

#### **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Chief Officer Resources and Strategy is recommended to approve a waiver of the Intermediate Value Procurement Rule to allow for the purchase of new display cabinets at Abbey House Museum, at a value of £ 18,447.

#### **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.