

Report of Head of Museums and Galleries

Report to Chief Officer Culture and Sport

Date: 8 November 2016

Subject: New Exhibition Cases for Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills and Kirkstall Abbey Visitor Centre

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, 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:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. Leeds Museums and Galleries has funding from Arts Council England through the Major Partner Museum programme which is to be used for exhibitions amongst other programmes. We propose to purchase six new display cases from the supplier, Click Netherfield, for our temporary exhibition gallery at Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills. These will however be interchangeable with other cases we have on site and across the service so will help provide a flexible approach to 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 £28,198 (ex VAT) and it is proposed that the order might be placed without seeking tenders from other suppliers.
2. It is also proposed to purchase four display cases for the Visitor Centre at Kirkstall Abbey, again using the Arts Council England funding. Click Netherfield provide high-spec cases meaning we are more likely to be able to borrow items from elsewhere. It will also bring Kirkstall Abbey up to the same level of object security and display as other key sites, such as Leeds City Museum and Lotherton Hall. It means there is a consistency of quality in our displays across the service. The value of the order is £18,600 (ex VAT). It is also proposed that this order might be placed without seeking tenders from other suppliers.
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 of Libraries, Arts and Heritage is recommended to approve the waiver of Contracts Procedure Rule No 12 - Intermediate Value Procurements (Quotations) to allow for the purchase of new display cabinets at Armley Mills and Kirkstall Abbey.

1. Purpose of this report

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

2. Background information

- 2.1 The temporary exhibition gallery at Leeds Industrial Museum is one the site's key ways of attracting repeat visitors; we have for the past four years offered a changing programme of high quality exhibitions to help us tell new and engaging stories for our visitors. The museum has struggled in the past with not having suitable display cases which has seriously affected our ability to display the most desirable objects, either by loaning from external organisations or sometimes by not being able to provide the correct conditions to display our own objects which may be vulnerable to, damp, changes in heat, light or other factors. The quality of these cases not only minimises these issues, but also provides much better security and conditions for objects on display.
- 2.2 This will allow us to not only continue with our temporary exhibition programme, thus attracting new and repeat visitors but will enable us to increase the quality of these exhibitions better enabling us to meet Arts Council England's goal of Excellence.
- 2.3 The cases can also be used flexibly; we already have two galleries Leeds Industrial Museum that use these systems and the rest of our service uses them. They will add to the rest of the services capability of putting on exhibitions.
- 2.4 At Kirkstall Abbey we plan to remove the current interpretation pods as these are no longer fit for purpose due to the room now being multi-functional (income generating through room hire as well as an interpretive and educational use) and replace with four static display cases incorporating refreshed artefacts to be displayed. The increased security of these cases compared to the existing ones will allow for the use of loan items. It will also bring Kirkstall Abbey up to the same level of object security and display as other key sites, such as Leeds City Museum and Lotherton

Hall. It means there is a consistency of quality in our displays across the service with the cases being interchangeable with those in situ at 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 considerable additional cost.

Similarly, this case and display system allows us to produce our own plinths, made by our own staff, whereas other display systems have their own included at 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.

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 these cases 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 12 in these circumstances, provided that the Relevant Chief Officer of Libraries, Arts and Heritage 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, Culture and Sport is recommended to approve the waiver of Contracts Procedure Rule No 12 - Intermediate Value Procurements (Quotations) to allow for the purchase of new display cabinets at Armley Mills and Kirkstall Abbey.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 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.

