

Report of Head of Station Development

Report to Chief Officer of Asset Management and Regeneration

Date: 20th January 2021

**Subject: Procurement of a Full Service Communications Advisors:
Communications, Campaigns and Public Affairs Framework**

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): City and Hunslet	
Has consultation been carried out?	<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
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	

Summary

1. Main issues

- Leeds City Council, in partnership with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Network Rail, Transport for the North, HS2Ltd, MHCLG, DfT, West Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, London and Continental Railways and Leeds BID developed the Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan. The Masterplan sets a compelling vision for the major transformation of Leeds City Station, already the busiest transport hub in the North of England, and will guide the future design and development of Leeds Station ensuring a joined up approach with HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and other rail interventions.
- To deliver the Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan Leeds City Council worked with the stakeholders to establish a Senior Steering Group, Programme Board and a number of Joint Working Groups including a Communication Working Group. The Partnership has faced significant funding and resourcing challenges as well as delivering within a complex Governance structure. LISM has now successfully progressed to delivery due to a shared drive to deliver benefits and exemplary collaboration. We are continuing with this partnership approach to enable the successful delivery of Leeds Integrated Station Portfolio (LISP).

- LISP anticipates the city's short-term demands and long-term opportunities: the projected doubling of growth in passenger numbers using the station, the need to travel from the city centre to the expanding business and residential quarter of the South Bank and the necessary integration of HS2, Network Rail's capacity improvements and Northern Powerhouse Rail. More than 34 million passengers pass through Leeds Station each year, and it has been the busiest railway Station in the North for most of the last decade. Network Rail's growth forecasts suggest peak use will increase by 81% by 2043. In redeveloping the Station there is the opportunity to create a gateway that drives economic growth and regeneration of the Leeds City Region.
- To ensure the successful delivery of LISP we require flexible communication, campaigns and public affairs support to align with, and complement, ongoing activity led by Leeds City Council and other key project partners. The work will be a mix of strategic planning and delivery, and requires a full service agency approach, backed up by strong sector knowledge and understanding. A framework is required as this level of specialist sector knowledge is not available in house.
- The Communications Working Group enables a collaborative approach to communication messages making sure that all partnerships working on projects within the Integrated Station Portfolio are aligned. This working group will manage the communication, campaigns and public affairs framework and all partners will be able to call off from the framework as required.
- The remit of this work is across all areas of the Leeds Integrated Station Portfolio including but not limited to, HS2, NPR, The Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway project (TCF), Strategic Rail Infrastructure and Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) projects. The funding for the first year of this contract will come from the external LPTIP grant. The contract will be for three years plus one 12 month extension (if required). The total fees including the extension will not exceed £150,000.
- Further to a Significant Operational Decision taken by the Director of City Development approving a procurement exercise and methodology, the Station Development Team, part of Asset Management and Regeneration has undertaken a tender exercise through an open tender route to secure external organisations to form a framework with two lots. This paper now seeks approval to appoint the organisations to the framework that can provide the specific services required.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

The appointment of a framework will contribute to the Leeds Station Programme and the delivery of the Best Council Plan's following priorities:

- **Health & wellbeing** - the modal shift from cars to rail will provide a positive climate change and in turn provide healthier lifestyles. The creation of the largest station cycle hub in the north will also meet forecasted growth in cycle usage and supports and promotes healthy and physically active lifestyles.
- **Sustainable infrastructure** – The increase in rail from redevelopment of the station and the impact from HS2 and NPR will lessen the demand for carbon-intensive air travel, road freight and car journeys by linking northern England with the Midlands

and London.

Further infrastructure improvements from the installation of segregated cycle lanes on Bishopgate, Neville Street and Dark Neville Street will help support the shift towards sustainable forms of transport, resulting in improved air quality facilitated by the reduction in harmful nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels. The arrival of HS2 which will also help support carbon reduction by having a mode shift from cars to trains.

- **Inclusive growth** – the proposed works for a multi-modal transport hub will facilitate modal shift, circulation and capacity across the region. Failure to address these constraints will be a barrier to growth for the city and region.

3. Resource Implications

- Staff time – the Station Development Team will continue to work with colleagues from the station partnership in Network Rail (NR), West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), TfN, LCR and HS2 Ltd.
- Overheads – Overheads will be reviewed as the schemes progress.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer of Asset Management and Regeneration is recommended to:

- a) Approve the award of the contracts for the Communications, Campaigns and Public Affairs Framework as below for a three year period following the issue of award decision letters to candidates, with the provision to extend the contract for up to a further one year.

Lot 1

Yorkhill Ltd
Aberfield Communication
DevoConnect
JFG Communications
Bradshaw Communications

Lot 2

Social Communications
Aberfield Communications
Yorkhill Limited
DevoConnect
JFG Communications

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report explains the processes that have been followed during this procurement exercise and to conclude the tendering procedure, and makes the recommendation for the award of a contract to the successful tenderers to form a Full Service Communications: communication, campaigns and public affairs advisors framework.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Over the last decade Leeds Station has consistently been the busiest transport hub in the North of England and one of the most important pieces of infrastructure in the

UK, with annual passenger numbers of 34 million. Passenger demand is expected to more than double with growth of 49% by 2023 and by 81% by 2043.

- 2.2 In order to accommodate this passenger growth and future growth including HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail, the station needs to receive significant investment for its redevelopment and transformation.
- 2.3 A Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan (LISM) has been developed which sets out a spatial strategy for the future redevelopment and transformation of the station and the wider Station District to accommodate the aforementioned rail passenger growth and the arrival of HS2.
- 2.4 Following on from the development of LISM the Leeds Integrated Station Portfolio (LISP) has been put together between the partnership organisations to break down the masterplan into deliverable projects which maximise the opportunity to bid for funding opportunities as they arise.
- 2.5 In March 2020 a Gateway 0 Review was carried out and it identified that the Council and its partners should agree a dynamic, tactical communications plan to reinforce the narrative messages and beneficial outcomes of the wider place transformation (city square, station, south bank and beyond). Following on from this the partnership communications working group was formed and a communications strategy and plan were developed.
- 2.6 The LISP Communications and Stakeholder Management Strategy was produced in April 2020 and maximises the opportunities for collaborative communications, builds understanding and support for both individual schemes and the wider programme, and mitigates the effects of any disruption to support the transformation of the existing station.
- 2.7 The purpose of this strategy is to provide an overarching document to ensure that communications that promote LISP are joined up and coordinated. With multiple partner organisations managing a variety of programmes and projects that fit within the Leeds Integrated Station Portfolio it is essential that all communications provide a cohesive integrated message.
- 2.8 Following approval of the strategy the communications plan was developed to make partners communicate as a collective. It was produced in partnership through the Communications Working Group and JWG A and was endorsed and approved via station board. It is a live document that is currently moving into its 'active' phase and enables the partnership to:
 - Work proactively together
 - Share messaging
 - Utilise resources appropriately and to best effect
 - Allows us to react quickly
 - Creates influencers and advocates to support LISP
 - Uses a variety of channels for communication
 - Considers the impact of Covid-19 and how we need to communicate & engage people in different ways
- 2.9 All communication activities within the communications plan will be regularly monitored and evaluated and the commission of the communication, campaigns

and public affairs support will be tasked with providing support and guidance on different aspects of work that come out of the plan.

2.10 Projects currently being delivered by the Partnership and requiring support from the communications, campaigns and public affairs commission are:

- The Leeds Existing Station Programme (LESP) works is focussed on resolving critical station user capacity issues, improving passenger experience, better integrating the station with the city, building resilience to accommodate future rail programmes and enhancing the station retail offer. The scope of the study includes entrances, concourses, overbridges, vertical circulation, retail and the Dark Arches. Network Rail are bidding to DfT and the Treasury for funding from RNEP to support this programme of works.
The commission will support this programme of works by communicating a strong message about Leeds Station requiring urgent rail investment funding by engaging with central government to gain RNEP funding. Once a final option for the station is decided upon the commission will support the engagement with stakeholders, support communications activities and carry out PR activities.
- The Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway is a discreet programme of works being progressed under LISP. Its focus is on redevelopment of the station entrance creating a multi modal interchange to address known capacity issues and improve passenger experience. It is part of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Leeds City Region Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme and scheme objectives have been developed in the context of the objectives for the overall Leeds TCF package, which is to support the delivery of policies and strategies of the Government, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds City Council, Leeds City Region Strategic Enterprise Partnership and other partners.

This work will require support from the commission in engaging with key stakeholders, including but not exclusive to businesses, strategic partners, elected members, and supporting communication, marketing activity and consultations including provision of events and managing social media.

Leeds City Council are undertaking communications activities for the city and region to ensure that the importance of HS2 and NPR being delivered is understood.

- Strategic Rail Infrastructure which is part of the Integrated Rail Plan and will set out how to efficiently deliver rail investments to best suit the needs of those in the Midlands and North in an integrated way.

In regard to NPR, HS2 and the strategic rail infrastructure the communications commission will be vital in providing a strong message to government and elected members about the rail investment that Leeds and city region requires. Insight-driven advice and support will be required to engage with central government, elected members and wider stakeholders about these priority transport schemes. The advisors will be required to support at advisory meetings, develop collateral and organise/facilitate events such as Parliamentary events.

- 2.11 This commission will work across all areas of LISM within the Leeds Integrated Station Portfolio including but not limited to LISP, HS2, NPR, The Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway (TCF) project, Strategic Rail Infrastructure and Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP). The commission will help develop a robust response that brings together a wide range of views and information from different stakeholders, and will update and build upon the work undertaken by the programme team and partners. There is a need to build support for strategic investments in rail to deliver the best outcomes for Leeds and the city region, and the UK as a whole.
- 2.12 The procurement of external consultants will be managed by the Leeds City Council station development team and communications and marketing team and deployed as required to meet strategic objectives. This approach will complement existing work and will also support the development of skills and experience in the in-house team, particularly around key channels and contacts to reach the target audiences.
- 2.13 To deliver this, high quality advice across a range of multi-disciplinary areas, to deliver on timescales. There is a requirement for communication, campaigns and public affairs support and advice to create a strong joined up and consistent approach across the multi-disciplinary areas in order to send a strong city message.
- 2.14 Further to a Significant Operational Decision taken by the Director of City Development approving a procurement exercise and methodology, the Station Development Team and Procurement and Commercial services unit has undertaken a tender exercise through an open tender route, to secure external organisations that can provide the specific Communications, Campaigns and Public Affairs Framework. This framework is required to support, align with and complement ongoing activity led by Leeds City Council and other key project partners. The work will be a mix of strategic planning and delivery, and requires a full service agency approach, backed up by strong sector knowledge and understanding.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 On Friday 6th November 2020, Procurement and Commercial Services published on YORtender an invitation to submit a tender for the Communications, Campaigns and Public Affairs Framework both Lot 1 and Lot 2. Bidders were asked to complete the Tender Schedule and Pricing Schedule and to submit this before the deadline for tender submissions set as midday on Wednesday 2nd December 2020.
- 3.2 Bidders were asked to complete six method statement questions relevant to the specification and a pricing schedule. Bidders were advised in the tender pack of the evaluation and scoring methodology, including a minimum quality threshold to meet (5/10) in each of the scored categories. The bidders were also advised that the top 5 organisations would be placed onto the framework for each lot.
- 3.3 By the tender submission deadline of 12 noon on Wednesday 2nd December, ten submissions were received for Lot 1 and nine submissions were received for Lot 2.
- 3.4 An evaluation panel was established for the purpose of assessing the submissions, at first individually and then together to agree consensus scores across the submissions for both Lots. The panel comprised representatives of the Station Development Team and Leeds Communications team.

- 3.5 For this open tender exercise, the evaluation criteria were split with 60% of the marks allocated to quality and 40% allocated to price. The quality criteria were assessed with reference to the method statements submitted by bidders. For Lot 1 six of the bidders met the minimum quality threshold for these questions of five out of ten (5/10) and for lot 2 five of the bidders met the minimum quality threshold for these questions of five out of ten (5/10).
- 3.6 Price was assessed based on a total adjusted hourly rate across 5 job roles: Director, Manager, Senior Officer and Junior Officer. Hourly rates for each of these job roles were required to be submitted. The hourly rate for each job role was added together to give a total overall hourly rate. The tenderer with the lowest total adjusted price would achieve the highest score available for price and the other tenders a reduced score based on calculating the percentage difference between them and the lowest price, and deducting this percentage from the maximum score available.
- 3.7 The combined price and quality evaluation as outlined in 3.5 and 3.6 above proved the first five bidders with the highest scores in both Lot 1 and Lot 2 as follows:

Lot 1

Yorkhill Ltd
Aberfield Communication
DevoConnect
JFG Communications
Bradshaw Communications

Lot 2

Social Communications
Aberfield Communications
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4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 As detailed in this report, a tender exercise was carried out in accordance with the CPRs, using the council's e-tendering system. By publishing the tender as an open opportunity, the opportunity was accessible to any potential tenderer in the market. The invitation to tender was advertised on Leeds City Council Supplier and Contract Management System Yortender.
- 4.1.2 There has been engagement with The Head of Station Development, The Director of City Development, Head of Transportation as well as the LISP Communications Partnership members around the importance of the role of specialist consultant in future work surrounding Leeds Station.
- 4.1.3 The Executive Member and Head of Communications have been consulted with and are fully supportive and in agreement for this temporary appointment.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The decision to proceed with the preferred bidders does not have any implications for Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.
- 4.2.2 Network Rail has developed an updated Diversity Impact Assessment which will be refreshed with input from the communications specialists as the programme of work progresses.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 LISM will contribute towards the following Best Council Plan 2020-25 priorities:

- Sustainable Infrastructure –
 - Improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability • Improving air quality, reducing pollution and noise •
 - Improving the resilience of the city's infrastructure and the natural environment, reducing flooding and other risks from future climate change •
 - Promoting a more competitive, less wasteful, more resource efficient, low carbon economy •
 - Strengthening digital and data 'Smart City' infrastructure and increasing digital inclusion
- Inclusive Growth –
 - Supporting the city's economic recovery from COVID-19 and building longer-term economic resilience •
 - Supporting growth and investment, helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential •
 - Supporting businesses and residents to improve skills, helping people into work and into better jobs •
 - Targeting interventions to tackle poverty in priority neighbourhoods • Tackling low pay

- 4.3.2 Entering into this tender arrangement allowed the opportunity to attract the best provider who understands the Council's statutory requirements and, therefore, demonstrate how their service can support the Council to meet those requirements and contribute to supporting the Council to achieve its Best Council plans.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 Infrastructure improvements in the city centre will help support the Climate Emergency agenda through the encouragement of sustainable forms of transport. The infrastructure offers alternative and affordable choice for the residents of Leeds and will help drive the shift away from private vehicles. The increase usage of sustainable forms of transport will make a significant contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions in an already busy and congested area. The delivery of LISM along with several key Highways schemes (Armley Gyratory and City Square) will dramatically reduce the flow of traffic on Bishopgate and Wellington Street and prioritise pedestrian and cycle routes as the main method of transport.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The contract is to be awarded to the bidders that have demonstrated the best value for money bid considering both quality and price. The evaluation criteria in this

procurement exercise were split with 60% assigned to quality and 40% assigned to price, as per Leeds City Council guidelines.

- 4.4.2 The appointment of a framework through this procurement exercise will not commit the Council to any level of fees other than those incurred in response to detailed instructions. As such the Council will remain in control of expenditure through regular monitoring and client liaison. There is current budget provision to support this work in 2020/21 from external funding, the continuation of the commission will be reviewed and the need for continued or additional budget provision in future years will be fed into departmental budget setting.
- 4.4.3 The Contract award will be for an initial three year period, with the possibility of extension for up to a further one year. The Council reserves the right to review contract performance and the scope for efficiency improvements and/or cost reductions in line with potential savings which the Council has reason to believe would be achievable by retendering the Contract. The Council will jointly review this position with the successful organisations after one year of service from the date of appointment and decide on the way forward that provides the best Value for Money. The Council makes no commitment as to actual volume of services ordered under the contract.

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

- 4.5.1 The procurement via a competitive open tender exercise has been conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement law (including the principles of fairness, equality, openness and transparency).
- 4.5.2 Approval to procure was granted under a Significant Operational Decision on the 5th November 2020, in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 3.1.8 which states "The Delegated Decision to undertake a procurement, whether it is a Key, Strategic Operational or Administrative Decision, will be taken at the point the procurement route is chosen and, subject to any project specific issues, this will normally be the main decision that all subsequent decisions flow from".
- 4.5.3 The decisions recommended in this report are classed as Significant Operational Decisions and are not eligible for call in.
- 4.5.4 The exempt Appendix 1 – Tender Evaluation, which sets out the scores received across the quality and price criteria by each bidder, is classified as confidential under Access to Information Rule 10.4(3), which relates to commercially sensitive information.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The bidders received detailed tender documentation outlining the requirements of the Council in respect of the communication services to be provided. The evaluation process was conducted in the manner specified in this report and has been robustly carried out with respect to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement law. It is therefore perceived that the risk of a challenge (and in particular, a successful challenge) being made by any unsuccessful bidder has been mitigated as far as possible.

4 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan is a major, multi-faceted, high profile and complex area of work that requires advisors to support the internal service providers in order to strengthen the city's relationship with a wide range of stakeholders.
- 5.2 By carrying out an open procurement for communications, campaigns and public affairs advisors it will ensure that the Station Development team are provided with the opportunity to call-off high quality advisors and resource capable of quickly responding to complex areas and issues., This is necessary to drive forward the Leeds Station Sustainable Travel Gateway programme of works and support the Council in achieving its aims and objectives, whilst meeting challenging and exacting timescales in a way that mitigates risks, achieves Value for Money and makes a significant contribution to the Best Council Plan.
- 5.3 The advice provided will support the delivery of Council priorities, offer the best value for money and facilitate the work that will be required for the foreseeable future. Furthermore the framework will strengthen the working relationships which contribute to the continued success of work carried out by the council and its partner organisations, providing the council with nationally renowned expertise to support it in achieving its aims for the station area.
- 5.4 The evaluation panel and interview panel has concluded that the highest scoring tenders in terms of quality and price is the following for each lot:
- Lot 1
Yorkhill Ltd
Aberfield Communication
DevoConnect
JFG Communications
Bradshaw Communications
- Lot 2
Social Communications
Aberfield Communications
Yorkhill Limited
DevoConnect
JFG Communications

6 Recommendations

The Chief Officer of Asset Management and Regeneration is recommended to:

- a) Approve the award of the contracts for the Full Service Communications: Communications, Campaigns and Public Affairs Framework as below for a three year period following the issue of Award Decision Letters to candidates, with the provision to extend the contract for up to a further one year. To support the LISP and other regeneration projects:

Lot 1
Yorkhill Ltd
Aberfield Communication
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JFG Communications

Bradshaw Communications

Lot 2 –

Social Communications

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