

Request permission to procure a contract to deliver the National Adopter Recruitment Campaign

Date: 08/11/2023

Report of: Commissioning and Market Management

Report to: Director of Children and Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- In support of the National Adoption Strategy this report seeks the approval of the Director of Children and Families Directorate to procure a contract via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework to deliver the Adoption National Recruitment campaign on behalf of Adoption England, previously known as the National Adoption team.
- A competitive tender will be undertaken with the providers on the CCS Campaign Solutions 2 (RM6125) framework. The aim is for the new contract to commence on the 01/04/2024 to the 31/03/2025 with options to extend for up to 24 months in any combination and will be a value of £450,000 per annum with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 including extensions.
- The tender will be evaluated using a combined price/quality split approach with a 70% quality / 30% price split. This requires a waiver of Contract Procedure Rule 15.2 (C).

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children and Families is recommended to agree the permission to undertake a competitive tender to procure a contract via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Campaign Solutions 2 (RM6125) Framework to deliver the Adoption National Recruitment campaign on behalf of Adoption England, the National Adoption team. For a period of 1 year from 01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025 with options to up to extend for 24 months in any combination and will be a value of £450,000 per annum with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 including extension. The length of this contract will be dependent on an appropriate level of funding being received from the DfE following from April 2025.
- b) The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve to waive Contract Procedure Rule 15.2 (C) to allow a combined price/quality split approach with an 70% quality / 30% price split.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

This proposal is based on direct funding from the DfE to the National Adoption team, now called Adoption England for the purpose of increasing the number of potential adopters coming forward to adopt children who are waiting across England. They are seeking greater numbers registering an interest to adopt, from all walks of life including from all social classes, ethnic groups, and sexual orientation. They are also seeking increased numbers of approved adopters against the number and to reduce the waiting times for black and ethnic minority children, siblings, children over 5 years old and disabled children.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: N/A – regional provision

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

The impact will be over the next three years to ensure enough adopters are recruited from diverse backgrounds, and fully prepared, to enable early placements with excellent matches for all children with an adoption plan.

The contract will do this by:

- Raising awareness and changing perceptions of adoption.
- Attracting people from diverse communities.
- Promote evidence based benefits of adoption for children to key decision makers.
- Use National Adoption Week to promote modern adoption in an open and honest way highlighting the lived experience of adoptees.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

1. The proposal to procure this contract has been agreed by the National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group made up of representatives from statutory and voluntary adoption agencies together with Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA), Adoption UK and Coram BAAF and through them all RAAs and VAAs.
2. The Executive Member for Children and Families was consulted about the decision to procure.

What are the resource implications?

3. The maximum budget per annum is £450,000 with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 should any extension is taken. .
4. The duration of this contract will be dependent on an appropriate level of funding received from the DfE and positive impact on the recruitment campaign. Funding is additional revenue funding that is ring-fenced to deliver the outcomes specified in the DfE grant agreement. Procuring this contract will not create additional financial pressure to Leeds City Council. Should the contracts not be procured, Leeds City Council in consultation with the National Adoption Strategic Lead will make other arrangements for the allocated amount with other activity or not claim this amount from the DfE (paid in arrears).

5. A competitive tender exercise will be undertaken utilising the corporate tender documentation including a number of method statement questions and a presentation .The CCS Framework permits us to do this. This is a high value procurement and the tender will be supported by the Procurement and Commercial services (PACS) People's Services Category team.
6. A tender evaluation panel will be made up of representatives from the NARSG and a separate panel will include individuals with lived adoption experience.

What are the legal implications?

7. The proposal to undertake this procurement was published on the forward plan on 26/09/2023. The total estimated value of the contract is £1,350,000 and so approval to procure this contract is a key decision and is subject to call in.
8. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
9. Undertaking this tender is in line with contract procedure rules (CPR) 9.1 and 9.2 High Value Procurement and using the CCS agreement is Compliant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. .
10. This procurement involves the waiver of CPR 15.2 (c); the tender will be evaluated using a combined price/quality split approach with an 70% quality / 30% price split.
 - a. This procurement is to appoint a creative marketing agency partner to design and deliver high impact and measurable multi-media marketing campaigns to attract new potential adopters, including Black African, Black Caribbean and mixed heritage adopters as well as targeting potential adopters from the LGBTQ+ community. This is fundamentally important to the successful implementation of the National Adoption Strategy. It is therefore essential a provider is procured who is able to deliver outstanding quality research.
 - b. There is a known market for this contract and so it may be possible to achieve the quality of model required and the intended outcomes for the contract at a lower cost than the set budget. Any saving would then be reinvested in other services in support of the National Adoption Strategy.
 - c. It is therefore deemed appropriate to use a combined price/quality split approach for the evaluation and to have a higher weighting for quality than the standard 60%. This will place more weight on the quality of bids but will also allow for price to be taken into account when evaluating the total scores to ensure VFM principle can be demonstrated as part of the assessment.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

1. The DfE funding must be spent as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and contribute towards the intended outcomes of the grant.
2. A National Adoption Strategy Team, now called Adoption England, has been established within Leeds City Council and will work closely with representatives from the Commissioning and PACS services to ensure the tender process is undertaken robustly in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Contracts Procedure Rules.
3. The project team will work in partnership with providers and monitor performance of the contracts to ensure they meet delivery requirements and deliver value of money.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 1 Children in care benefit greatly from adoption leading to better outcomes for their wellbeing, education and future prospects. This contract will help to recruit more adopters particularly from underrepresented groups.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 2 Other options have been considered including carrying out a full competitive tender however utilising the CCS framework was deemed the best approach

b) How will success be measured?

- 3 The RAA Leader's Group is responsible for ensuring projects and activities deliver the intended outcomes of the grant and that performance is robustly monitored against the priorities of the National Adoption Strategy. Day to day contract management will be led by the Adoption England National Team.
- 4 The specification for the tender will set out specific targets and performance measures that link to the overall outcomes of the grant.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 5 The aim is to publish the tender in November 2023 and for the contract to be awarded by March 2024. Following a mobilisation period the contract will commence 1st April 2024.

Appendices

- 6 EDCI

Background papers

- 7 None