

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2098

Title: Social media software

Executive Summary:

Since March 2014, the GLA Marketing and social media channel managers across the GLA have been using social media software Sprout Social to assist with collaborative working and reporting. Since October 2016, the software has also been used to manage the Mayor's social media channels.

Sprout Social enables publishing of content, monitoring of interactions/posts and management of the GLA channels on a single user-interface. Sprout Social is now fully embedded across the GLA. The GLA is happy with the performance of the software and would like to continue to use Sprout Social for a further year until 31 March 2018.

Decision:

The Assistant Director, External Relations approves:

- expenditure of up to £24,744 from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 on social media software, Sprout Social, to assist in the effective management of the GLA's suite of official social media channels; and
- a related exemption under the GLA's Contracts & Funding Code from the requirement to procure services competitively

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Emma Strain

Position: Assistant Director, External Relations

Signature:



Date: 19.4.17

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The GLA introduced a new social media strategy in March 2014. Since then, GLA Marketing and social media channel managers across the GLA have been managing the GLA's suite of official social media channels using social media software Sprout Social to assist with collaborative working and reporting. It is enabling GLA staff to be responsive to Londoners and to help to provide a good service.
- 1.2 Across the GLA, positive feedback has been given as teams continue to use the tool in their day-to-day operations to support business-as-usual activity and deliver on GLA requirements. As such, and for business continuity, the GLA would like to extend usage of Sprout Social until the review of this service at the end of March 2018.
- 1.3 The GLA would like to increase investment to ensure all team members have an individual login for audit purposes as well as access to advanced tools, such as the asset library.
- 1.4 A review of GLA social media software will be undertaken at the start of 2018.
- 1.5 Section 4.1 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code requires, where the expected value of a contract for services is between £10,000 and £150,000 the services required should be tendered or called off from an accessible framework. Section 5 provides however, that an exemption from this requirement may be approved where the proposed contractor has had previous involvement in a project or is to continue existing work which cannot be separated from the new project/work.

Social media software and services were procured competitively from Sprout Social in 2014. It is proposed, that we continue our contract with Sprout Social until March 2018. This is because Sprout Social has been fully embedded across the organisation. The ease of use this platform offers is significant as it is used by both communications professionals and non-communications professionals across the organisation – from Marketing, to policy teams including Culture, Business, Environment and the GLA's Intelligence Unit. It is an essential tool for managing, publishing and reporting on the performance of our social media channels in order to deliver our communications objectives. This service will be reviewed, in the context of wider strategic reviews, to take into consideration future priorities and to ensure that it continues to offer us the best value for money and meets our objectives.

Officers consider therefore, that because of Sprout Social's previous involvement, best value would be secured by the proposed award of contract to Sprout Social. The Assistant Director's approval of an exemption from the requirement of section 4.1 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding to tender for the services required or call them off from an accessible framework is sought accordingly.

- 1.6 Approval is being sought retrospectively in this instance as a shortage of staff and an increase in unexpected, but important, work meant resources had to be directed away from completing this paperwork. To avoid this occurring again, drafting this paperwork will begin in January 2018.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The objective of using Sprout Social is to allow the GLA channel managers to publish content, monitor GLA interactions and posts and manage GLA channels on a single user-interface. Channel

managers are organisation-wide and Sprout Social enables collaborative working when colleagues do not have face-to-face contact on a daily basis.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The general duty to promote equality arising from the Equality Act 2010 which requires the Mayor to have due regard to the need to “encourage people who share protected characteristics (which there are nine; age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation) to participate in public life or in other activity in which their participation is disproportionately low”. This sits alongside the Mayor’s duty, set out in the Greater London Authority Act 1999, to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between different minority groups.
- 3.2 The construction of all GLA marketing campaigns take into consideration the audience for which the campaign is aimed at. In every case, materials are assessed to ensure they are fully accessible and in line with the public sector equality duty.

4. Other considerations

a) Key risks and issues

- 4.1 The success of the GLA’s social media output relies on collaborative working, prompt and helpful responses to Londoners and compelling and engaging content. The risk of not employing Sprout Social is that it would disrupt the operative processes embedded into the GLA for the last 24 months, the collaborative procedures followed by staff and the successes delivered to date.

b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 The use of Sprout Social ensures the efficient use of resources across the organisation and that social media content and messaging is relevant and impactful for Londoners.
- 4.3 Additionally the GLA Consolidated Budget for 2017/18 includes the following key deliverable that is relevant to this work:
- Engage in a better dialogue with Londoners to ensure that the GLA is responsive, delivers valued benefits to Londoners and ensures value for money by centralising the marketing budget to prevent uncoordinated growth bids.

c) Impact assessments and consultations

- 4.4 Feedback from the GLA social media channel managers is that Sprout Social is a useful tool and this is evidenced by the fact it has been embraced across the organisation. The GLA Marketing team and channel managers would like to continue to use Sprout Social following two years of successful use.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The estimated cost of this contract is £24,744 and will be funded from the 2017-18 Marketing Programmes budget held within the External Relations Unit (External Affairs Directorate).

6. Legal comments

Section 4 of the GLA Contracts and Funding Code (the 'Code') requires the GLA to call off the services required from an accessible framework or conduct an advertised tender. However, an assistant director may approve an exemption from this requirement under section 5 of the Code upon certain specified grounds. One of those grounds is exemptions may be approved where the proposed contractor has had previous involvement in a project or is to continue existing work which cannot be separated from the new project/work. Officers have indicated at section 1 of this report that this ground applies and that the proposed contracts affords value for money.

7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	March-April 2014
Announcement	March-April 2014
Delivery Start Date	April 2017
Delivery End Date	March 2018
Project Closure:	March 2018

Appendices and supporting papers:

ADD 300
ADD 189

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Note: This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Natasha Hutchinson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:

PP
T. Benaville

Date:

18/4/17

