

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD203

Title: Social media strategy – regular reviews

Executive Summary:

In October 2013 the GLA procured a specialist supplier via a competitive tender process to work on a new social media strategy. Five suppliers applied for the work and Blue State Digital (BSD) was awarded the contract.

The GLA launched the new social media strategy in spring 2014 and now has a small suite of official social media channels. The GLA would now like BSD to review the progress of its strategy and make recommendations for improvement as regular reviews are necessary in order to keep pace with the ever evolving digital landscape.

Decision:

The Assistant Director of External Relations approves:

1. Expenditure of up to £11,500 to appoint Blue State Digital Ltd (BSD) to review the GLA's social media strategy in two periods across one year (approximately September 2014 and July 2015)
2. An exemption from the Contracts and Funding Code from the requirement to seek three or more written quotes or call off from a framework on the basis that BSD is best placed to review the strategy it recommended and provide recommendations for improvement.

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: 10 June 2014

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In October 2013 the GLA procured a specialist supplier via a competitive tender process to work with them on a new social media strategy. Five suppliers pitched for the work and Blue State Digital (BSD) was awarded the contract.
- 1.2 The GLA launched its new social media strategy in March 2014 and now has an official suite of channels. The digital landscape is constantly evolving and it is necessary to review the strategy regularly and update in line with market developments and changing behaviours online, for example how people share and consume content.
- 1.3 For the first two reviews, the GLA would like to work with Blue State Digital (BSD) who worked closely with the GLA over a six month period on the recommended strategy. BSD is best placed to review the strategy initially because it has the context in which the recommendations were set and costs can be kept down by not repeating this context setting work.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of the work is to ensure the GLA's social media strategy does not become outdated. The GLA needs to keep pace with the digital environment, which requires an iterative process to constantly review and update. The outcome will be a set of recommendations from BSD about how the GLA can improve its social media offering. These recommendations will be implemented as appropriate.

3. Other considerations

a) key risks and issues

The risks of not doing this piece of work are an outdated social media strategy at the GLA. The risks of not working with BSD in the first year are a potential inferior outcome because a new specialist supplier will not have the same context, potential higher costs due to the time required for a new specialist supplier to understand the full context and high human resource costs to run a tender for a relatively low cost project (£11,500).

b) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

External Affairs' priorities in the GLA business plan 2013/14 to 2015/16 include:

- o Prepare an integrated marketing strategy, increasing both the efficiency and impact of communication with Londoners (p45)

In addition, the use of BSD will ensure resources are used efficiently and the GLA demonstrates value for money for Londoners.

c) impact assessments and consultations

The GLA will undertake this piece of work to ensure it maintains industry best practice.

Teams across the GLA will be consulted as appropriate.

4. Financial comments

- 4.1 Approval is being sought to spend of up to £11,500 for Blue State Digital (BSD) to review the GLA's social media strategy and an exemption from the Contracts and Funding Code on the basis that Blue State Digital is best placed to review the strategy it recommended and provide recommendations for improvement
- 4.2 The total estimated cost of £11,500 to review the strategy will be funded from the Marketing Programme budget. It should be noted that the expenditure will occur between two financial years; £7,500 in 2014-2015 and £4,000 from 2015-16. Expenditure relating to 2014-15 will be contained within the existing Marketing Programme budget and for 2015-16 it is also expected to be met from Marketing Programme budget however this will be subject to the annual corporate planning & budget setting process.
- 4.3 All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.
- 4.4 Any changes to this proposal, including budgetary implications will be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process.
- 4.5 External Relations Unit is reminded to ensure that all proposed expenditure complies with the Authority's Financial Regulations and the Contracts and Funding Code. In addition officers are advised to liaise with the legal, procurement and finance teams as appropriate in relation to the procurement of goods and services for the above mentioned works.
- 4.6 External Relations Unit within the External Affairs Directorate will be responsible for managing the proposed contract.

5. Legal comments

- 5.1. Sections 1 – 4 of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the assistant director in accordance with the Code fall within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 5.2. Section 3 of the Code requires the GLA to seek three or more written quotations in respect of the services required or call off the services required from an accessible framework. The assistant director may approve an exemption from section 5 of the Code upon certain specified grounds, one of which is where the risks of carrying out a competitive procurement outweigh the benefits of applying an exemption from the Code. Officers have indicated at paragraph 1 of this report that this ground applies and that the proposed contracts affords value for money. On this basis the assistant director may approve the proposed exemption if satisfied with the content of this report.
- 5.3. Officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed.

5. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	June 2014
Announcement	n/a
Delivery Start Date	August 2014
Final evaluation start and finish	August 2015
Delivery End Date	August 2015
Project Closure	August 2015

Appendices and supporting papers:

Single Source Request form

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:

Kelly McMorran Barnard 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 GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE:

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

Signature:

Date: