

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2330

Title: Spike digital engagement monitoring software

Executive Summary:

Approval is being sought to renew a licence for the social media engagement monitoring tool, Spike. Spike enables the GLA to monitor social engagement with news stories about London across social media channels more effectively – and to see which news stories are driving the most engagement in real-time. This helps us to understand better the evolving media landscape and will ensure the GLA delivers a timely and effective service to Londoners across its communications channels.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of External Affairs approves:

1. Expenditure of £30,000 in 2018/19 to renew a licence for the use of social media engagement tool, Spike (the licence will cover August 2018 to July 2019); and
2. A related exemption from the requirement of the GLA's Contracts & Funding Code to undertake a competitive process in commissioning the services, and to re-commission the above license from NewsWhip without undertaking a competitive process.

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:

26.2.19

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Approval is being sought to renew the social media engagement monitoring software, Spike, provided to the GLA pursuant to an agreement with Spike's owner the NewsWhip Group. Spike enables the GLA to monitor engagement with news stories about London across social media channels more effectively – and to see which news stories are driving the most engagement in real-time. This helps the GLA to understand better the evolving social media landscape and will ensure that the GLA delivers a timely and effective service to Londoners across its communications channels. Spike was initially procured by the GLA in 2017 for 12 months (through ADD2153) using a single source justification and this decision seeks approval to extend the existing contract. It was stipulated in the contract that the agreement would automatically renew for the same period again unless 30 days' notice was given.
- 1.2 Approval is being sought due to an administrative oversight within the team.
- 1.3 Section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code ("the Code") requires-where the expected value of a contract for services is between £10,000 and £150,000- that the services required should be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or called off from an accessible framework. Section 10 of the Code provides however, that an exemption from this requirement may be approved where the proposed contractor has certain technical, artistic, exclusive right or intellectual property rights. NewsWhip's technical solution is, at this point in time, unique in its ability to meet the needs of the GLA's social media and news service in that Spike uses patented technology not yet available to the GLA elsewhere to provide a unique way to monitor social media and the news together on one dashboard. It is unlikely therefore, that a procurement exercise would identify a solution providing comparable functionality and at the same price point. Indeed, the platforms SocialFlow and Dataminr, each of which have separate functionality that are combined in NewsWhip Spike, have a similar per-organisation pricing structure.
- 1.4 Approval of an exemption from the requirement of section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code to procure the supplies in question competitively is therefore sought.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The objective of using Spike is to continue to provide the GLA with a comprehensive social media engagement tool. It allows the GLA to monitor the broader conversation on social media so we can engage as appropriate. It enables the GLA to continuously learn what Londoners want from the GLA's official channels and therefore improve our social media presence on an ongoing basis.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 Under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority, the GLA must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only). Further section 33 (1) of the GLA Act requires the GLA to make appropriate arrangements with a view to ensuring that in the formulation of the policies and proposals to be included in any of his statutory strategies; and in their implementation, there is "due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people".

- 3.2 The construction of all GLA marketing and communications activity is to take into consideration the audience for which the activity is aimed at. In every case, materials are assessed to ensure they are fully accessible and in line with the public sector equality duty. NewsWhip Spike allows us to ensure the GLA's digital communications and marketing output meets the expectations and needs, and coheres with the interests of, all Londoners. This means our online materials are able to be much more effective and efficient at directing all Londoners to relevant services or information.

4 Other considerations

- 4.1 Key risks and issues: The success of the GLA's social media operation relies on collaborative working, prompt and helpful responses to Londoners and compelling and engaging content. The risk of not renewing Spike is not having a clear picture of what the biggest issues are for Londoners and not being able to engage and respond accordingly in real time.
- 4.2. Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities: External Affairs' priorities include; Deliver an effective and efficient public information service to support the Mayor's and the GLA's communication with Londoners; Deliver integrated marketing campaigns utilising both digital and traditional marketing assets, which allow the Authority to promote its work effectively and listen to Londoners' opinions and concerns.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 The £30,000 cost of the proposed license will be funded from the External Relations budget for 2018/19 held within the Communities & Intelligence Directorate.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Assistant Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general power of competence under s.30 GLA Act.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Assistant Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Assistant Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 Section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code ("Code") requires that a tender exercise be conducted for services with values of that proposed or that they be called off from an accessible framework. However, section 10 of the Code provides that exemptions from that requirement may be approved by the Assistant Director where a specific ground for exemption applies. One of those grounds is that the supplier is unique in its ability to provide compatibility with an existing service/has exclusive Intellectual Property rights – in this case to the Spike tool - and is therefore the only supplier able to provide the service. Officers have indicated at paragraph 1 that this ground applies and have indicated in paragraph 1 that this contract offers value for money. Therefore, if the Assistant Director is satisfied with the content of this report and the grounds for exemption outlined they may approve the exemption sought.
- 6.4 If retrospectively approved, officers must ensure that all contract documentation is put in place between and executed by the GLA and NewsWhip is retained for a sufficient length of time.

7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	August 2018
Delivery Start Date	August 2018
Delivery End Date	July 2019

Appendices and supporting papers:

GLA Single Source Decision Paper dated 22/01/2019

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) 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 it has been approved 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 - Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included 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:

Andrew Hyams has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

Corporate Investment Board

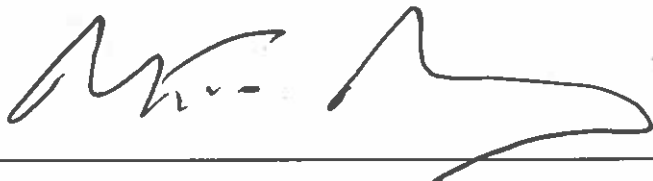
This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 18 February 2019.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature



Date

18.02.19

