

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PARTNER - PROCUREMENT

Procurement report

05 October 2023

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Board before taking effect.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Board approve the commencement of the procurement for a Communications and Public Relations partner in order to allow a contract to be in place from 1 April 2024.
- (b) The Board approve the proposal for the new contract for the Communications and Public Relations partner to be for a period of two years with the option for a further two, one year extensions
- (c) The Board requests that Plymouth City Council as the Communications and Engagement Lead Authority, procure and award the new contract for the Communications and Public Relations partner on behalf of Peninsula Transport.

I. Background

A competitive tendering exercise was conducted in autumn 2020 to secure a communications and public relations partner for Peninsula Transport.

Following the tender Coast Communications were appointed as the Communications and Public Relations Provider for the Peninsula Transport Sub-national Transport Body (STB) and the Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF).

Plymouth City Council led the tender, as the Communications and Engagement Lead Authority for the STB, with support from Devon County Council.

The current contract with Coast Communications is for the period January 2021 – March 2024. All allowable extensions within the current contract have been enacted and hence a new competitive tendering exercise is required in order to secure a Communications and Public Relations provider for the period post March 2024.

The Communications and Public Relations provider to the STB is tasked with supporting Peninsula Transport to:-

- Build awareness with stakeholders of Peninsula Transport (including PRTF) and its purpose.

- Ensure key stakeholders are fully briefed on, and engaged with, the work of Peninsula Transport (including PRTF).
- Maximise funding opportunities.
- Define a clear set of offers and asks to Government for Peninsula Transport (including PRTF) and brief key stakeholders on how they can help deliver.

The duties undertaken as part of the contract include; account management, brand management, public affairs, stakeholder communication, management of communication channels, producing and updating the communications toolkit, strategic planning and programme development and evaluation.

To ensure that a Communications and Public Relations provider is in place for the period post March 2024, and thus maintain the provision of communications and public relations support to the STB, it is recommended that the Board approve the commencement of a competitive tendering exercise for a Communications and Public Relations provider to allow this work to be completed prior to the end of the current contract with Coast Communications.

2. Financial Considerations

A competitive tendering exercise will be undertaken for the Communications and Public Relations provider for Peninsula Transport which will ensure that communications and public relations support can be provided to the STB within the budget available for this activity and that value for money is achieved.

3. Environmental Impact Considerations

There are no environmental impact considerations associated with this paper.

4. Equality Considerations

There are no specific equality considerations associated with this paper.

5. Legal Considerations

The current communications and public relations contract with Coast Communications ends on the 31 March 2024; all options to extend the current contract with Coast have been taken up and hence a competitive tendering exercise is now required in order to procure a Communications and Public Relations Provider for the period post March 2024.

The procurement to be undertaken will be in compliance with Plymouth City Council's procurement processes, Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Law.

6. Risk Management Considerations

The risks associated with commencing the procurement of a Communications and Public Relations provider are low. The tender will be undertaken in compliance with Plymouth City Council's procurement processes, Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Law. Furthermore, commencing the tender process now will ensure that the contract for a Communications and Public Relations

provider is in place for the period post March 2024 ensuring that Peninsula Transport have continuous provision of this key service.

7. Public Health Impact

There are no public health impacts associated with this paper.

8. Summary

The current Communications and Public Relations Contract with Coast Communications is due to expire in March 2024.

Coast were appointed as the Communications and Public Relations partner to Peninsula Transport following a competitive tender in autumn 2020.

All allowable extensions within the current contract have been enacted and hence a new competitive tendering exercise is required in order to secure a Communications and Public Relations Provider for the period post March 2024. It is recommended that this procurement commences now to ensure that the new contract for a Communications and Public Relations provider is in place prior to the end of the current contract.