

Communications



ACCESS Joint Committee

Date: 12 November 2020

Report by Officer Working Group

Subject:	Communications
Purpose of the Report:	To update the Joint Committee on the implementation of ACCESS' approach to communications and public relations
Recommendations:	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the report;• note that a further report will follow subsequent to the interviews scheduled for 9th November.
Enquiries to:	Kevin McDonald kevin.mcdonald@accesspool.co.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2020/21 Business Plan, as agreed by the Joint Committee (JC) at its December 2019 meeting includes a communications review.
- 1.2 The JC identified the need to have a Communications Plan to ensure that key stakeholders are identified, and key messages are directed to the appropriate audience.
- 1.3 A communications workshop was held after the JC meeting on 17 July, led by Hymans Robertson which ascertained the current perceptions of the ACCESS Pool and identified a number of measures to be implemented to shape future communications and to influence the perceptions.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 7 September 2020, the JC considered a paper recommending appointing external communications support, and a proposal from the ASU that the procurement framework services provided by specialists Bloom be used. The JC agreed these recommendations, and that Essex be designated as the procurement lead authority.

2. Progress

- 2.1 ASU Officers have held meetings with Claire Turner, Bloom's Customer Development Manager to formalise the arrangement and the engagement terms were reviewed in conjunction with Squire Patton Boggs.
- 2.2 Meetings were held at which Hymans Robertson joined the ASU and Bloom. The principle outputs of these are:
 - Hymans reviewed the Bloom category listing and identified two potential suppliers. A further eight names were given to Bloom by Hymans, of which four were subsequently onboarded onto Bloom's framework;
 - a service specification was finalised (this is a Bloom template document which draws heavily on the report Hymans presented to the September JC);
 - the scoring matrix set out below was finalised:

UPDATED	Element	Weighting	
Quality	Written submission	40%	80%
Service fit	LGPS experience	10%	
	Interview	30%	
Price	Price	20%	20%

- 2.3 At its 1 October meeting the Officer Working Group proposed that interviews be conducted by a panel consisting of representation from the JC, OWG and the ASU with an invitation extended to s151 Officers. Hymans Robertson and the ASU will support the panel.
- 2.4 In a 16 October briefing call with Cllr Kemp-Gee and Cllr Barker, the ACCESS JC Chairman and Vice Chairman suggested that Member representation include Cllr Soons from Suffolk.
- 2.5 The service specification was issued to six providers on 21 October.

- 2.6 At their 23 October meeting s151 Officers stated they were comfortable with the panel not including a s151 representative.
- 2.7 Interviews are planned for 9 November. As a consequence, a further paper on this matter will follow, prior to the JC meeting on 12 November. It is anticipated that this paper will contain a recommendation to approve the appointment of an external communications partner.

3. Timetable

- 2.8 Each milestone in the procurement timetable subsequent to the issuance of the service specification is set out below.

Stage	Date
Service specification issued	21/10/20
Deadline for clarification questions	23/10/20
Clarification responses issued	26/10/20
Deadline for bidder submission	28/10/20
Evaluation period commences	29/10/20
Evaluation period concludes	05/11/20
Consensus meeting (if needed)	06/11/20
Confirmation of shortlist	06/11/20
Interviews of shortlisted bidders	09/11/20
Preferred bidder identified	10/11/20
Joint Committee approval	12/11/20
Contact award and commencement	16/11/20

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the report;
- note that a further report will follow subsequent to the interviews scheduled for 9th November.