

By: Roger Gough – Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management
Peter Gilroy – Chief Executive

To: Cabinet – 1st February 2010

Subject: Decision to award the Kent TV contract to an external company.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks to inform members of the progress of the tender for the provision of community TV

1. Introduction

During its two-year pilot period, Kent TV has received over 2.5 million visits and provided opportunities for Kent to showcase itself regionally, nationally and internationally. It has provided the county with an innovative and effective way of communicating in the 21st Century. Over those last two years, the pilot has given us the opportunity to learn a great deal; we have had the chance to explore what does and does not work in terms of content and what things we would like to do differently. The re-tender presents an opportunity to expand the reach of the project further to include training facilities, web casting and a youth channel.

2. The Review

- 2.1 In the summer of 2009, the decision was made to extend the existing contract with Ten Alps until March 2010, in order to conduct a review of the service. The review was conducted to determine Kent TV's successes & shortcomings and identify areas for development against the original Cabinet paper written in April 2007.
- 2.2 Thirty-six interviews were conducted with Kent TV Board members, elected members, businesses, voluntary organisations, public sector organisations and service users. Participants were asked for their views on the current service and what they would do to improve it in the future.
- 2.3 The review examined the original Cabinet report submitted in April 2007 and assessed Kent TV's successes, weaknesses and opportunities in various areas including Local Content, Widening Participation, Education, Commercial Benefits, Technological Innovation, Employment, Partnership Working and Governance.
- 2.4 The review found that the general response to the Kent TV pilot was positive and highlighted areas for improvement.
- 2.5 The review informed the specification for the tender process.

3. The Tender Process

- 3.1 Following the review, specifications were developed in partnership with Cabinet, Directorates, Personnel, Procurement, Information Services Group, Legal & Democratic Services, the Kent TV Board and partner organisations such as Visit Kent.
- 3.2 To encourage economies of scale the tender document integrated the existing What's On and Webcasting contracts with the Kent TV contract.
- 3.3 The combined contracts are valued at £750,000 per annum and a contract will not be awarded for more than this figure. These costs are broken down to £600,000 for Kent TV, £100,000 for What's On and £50,000 for Webcasting.
- 3.4 The advert was placed on the South East Business portal and also in the Official Journal of the European Union. The companies who expressed an interest were all sent a copy of the specifications and contract.
- 3.5 In November, the specifications and proposed contract were sent out to the interested parties. The Council received a number of tender documents by the December deadline.

4. Interviews and the contract discussions

- 4.1 The companies which met the minimum requirements were invited to pitch their ideas for the future of Kent TV to a panel.
- 4.2 Due to the adverse weather conditions, the original presentation date of 18 December 2009 was moved to 14 January 2010.
- 4.3 The panel consisted of Paul Carter (Leader of the Council), Roger Gough (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management), Bryan Sweetland (Deputy Cabinet Member for Corp Support Services & Performance Management), Michael Northey (Deputy Cabinet Member for Corp Support Services & Performance Management), Chris Luke (Interim Head of Procurement) and Tanya Oliver (Director for Strategic Development and Public Access).
- 4.4 The presentations confirmed there were a number of strong contenders to run the channel.
- 4.5 Officers have been clarifying the proposals of the contenders and there will be an oral update as to the progress of these discussions at Cabinet.

5. Conclusion

Due to the adverse weather conditions the tender process has been delayed. The companies wishing to run the channel have made their presentations however the assessment of their proposals within the procurement process is still as yet unfinished. It is expected that a decision regarding the continuation of Kent TV will be made shortly; however due to time constraints Cabinet is asked to delegate to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management the decision of the final approval of the provider company and the award of the contract.

6. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Note the progress made to date.

2. Authorise the Chief Executive to extend the existing Kent TV and Webcasting contracts by one month should this be necessary.
3. Delegate to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management the final selection and approval of the provider company; and, subject to satisfactory outcome to the clarification of the tenders' proposals, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services & Performance Management be authorised to enter into the relevant contracts with such service provider.

7. Background Documents:

GapGemini Review of Kent TV

Specifications for Kent TV

8. Author Contact Details

Tanya Oliver – Director of Strategic Development and Public Access

✉ Tanya.oliver@kent.gov.uk ☎ 01622 221878