

Procurement Plan – Connexions Service



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1. Background

Connexions Berkshire provide impartial information, advice, guidance (IAG) and support to young people as they move through their teenage years into adulthood and working life. The key purpose is to help young people aged 13-19, and up to 25 for those who have learning difficulties or disabilities, to engage in education, employment and training (EET), so that they become successful adults. They have been doing so under the current pan-Berkshire contract, since 2007.

2. Terms of Reference

2.1. Reason for Requirement

The current contract expires on 31 March and cannot be extended further in its current form. Moreover doubts have been raised by many of the parties to it about the structure of the current arrangement. A Framework Agreement is considered the most appropriate vehicle for a pan-Berkshire joint procurement of this nature.

2.2. Objectives

The Berkshire authorities need a new contractual vehicle through which a continuing service can be provided and which allows individual authorities the flexibility to negotiate their own needs to reflect their own service priorities and budget availability in the light of spending cuts.

2.3. Project Scope

See above

2.4. Project Constraints/Assumptions

Funding for 2011-12 was re-routed and reduced following the election of the Coalition Government. The introduction of a new 'All-Age Careers service', to be in place from April 2012 was also announced. These developments necessitated a re-evaluation of the role of Connexions and the responsibilities of the Local Authority and its schools. Further information was provided in the Education Bill (January 2011) but the proposed role and remit of the 'All-Age Careers Service' are not yet clear.

2.5. Dependencies

- Project team availability.
- Provider's ongoing ability to deliver the service in the light of budget reductions during 2010-11 and for 2011-12

3. Value for Money

The current service is being reduced in scope considerably as a result of budget cuts. From 2012 the shape and nature of the service will change significantly as many of the responsibilities will transfer to the 'All-Age Careers Service' and to schools. In this interregnum period between expiry of the current contract and clarification of the delivery requirements from April 2012, the Framework Agreement represents the most cost-effective way of maintaining the delivery of these services.

4. Timescales

Key Milestones	Anticipated Dates
LAMB agreement	28 January 2011
Draft Framework Agreement to Connexions	7 February 2011
Target date for Agreeing documentation with Connexions	21 February 2011
Sign Agreement	01 March 2011
Contract Start Date	01 April 2011

This contract will be a Framework Agreement, let on an interim basis for 12 months pending clarification of the future legislative requirements. Following this, a new Framework Agreement will be set up based on competitive tenders to be sought later in 2011.

5. Financial Breakdown

5.1. Current cost breakdown

The budget for the Framework Agreement for 2011 / 2012 is £600k.

5.2. Cashable Savings

The budget for 2011-12 has been reduced from £1,065,998 in 2010-11.

5.3. Project Costs

Only very minor sundry expenditure is anticipated for this project, aside from the manpower cost relating to the project team involvement, with officers from local authorities forming the project team. In addition, there are consultancy fees at £1,831.

6. Procurement

6.1. Procurement process and methods

It is proposed to negotiate the Framework Agreement with Connexions Berkshire, the current Provider as an interim measure prior to the introduction of the new All Age Careers Service with effect from 1 April 2012.

The Framework Agreement will be procured in collaboration with other Berkshire authorities. Under the Framework, each individual authority will be able to negotiate the specific services they require within the funding they have available.

6.2. Advertising

These are Part B services under Public Contract Regulations and as such do not need to be advertised in the OJEU; however an Award Notice will have to be published after the Agreement has been formally ratified.

6.3. Tender Evaluation

Not applicable.

7. Risk Management

7.1. Risks and Mitigation Options

7.1.1. Financial

There is always a risk of not being able to meet statutory requirements, with the reduced budget available for 2011-12. This will be mitigated by ensuring that specific detailed proposals are sought from Connexions Berkshire prior to a formal Order being placed.

7.1.2. Timescale

Any service re-design that is dependant on guidance contained within a White Paper is at risk of the guidance being delayed. The only option the project team has in mitigating this risk is to continue preparing as many of the standard procurement documents as possible, and incorporate any guidance changes as soon as it is released.

7.1.3. Staffing

No major risks associated with staffing.

7.1.4. Commercial

The implication of the White Paper guidance being delayed is that the specification could be uncertain or subject to change, making some aspects of the pricing only provisional. This could have an impact on VFM, if changes have to be negotiated post-contract, or in the number of bids received, with the greatest risk to the project being no bids at all.

7.1.5. Ethical

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed and approved by the appropriate Chief Officer before commencing with any re-design of the service to ensure any ethical risks have been considered.

7.2. Contingency Plans – Business Continuity

7.2.1. Delivery is provided by an external organisation which is able to contact young wherever they live or are educated, enabling Connexions to maintain business in the event of an emergency affecting the Council's operation.

7.2.2. Due diligence has been undertaken to ensure that the funding allocated to the Framework Agreement will be sufficient to enable Connexions to maintain the agreed levels of service delivery. Priorities for service delivery will be agreed with Connexions in advance of the commencement of the Framework Agreement.

8. Equality

8.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been completed for this requirement and is attached.

9. Project Organisation

9.1. Project Sponsor

The Project Sponsor is Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People and

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Learning who has full authority for the project and will provide overall direction and final authorisation of the expenditure. The Sponsor will chair progress meetings when required.

9.2. Project Board

The Project Board will consist of the following officers, forming:

1. Project Sponsor – Janette Karklins Director CYP&L)
2. Martin Surrell – Senior Adviser CYP&L) BFC
3. Rob Atkins – Head of Procurement)
4. Guy Masters WBC
5. Andy Tubbs W Berks
6. Kirsten Carr RBC

The board responsibilities include:

- Agreeing the scope, objectives and constraints of the project
- Agreeing the overall project plan
- Overseeing the production of tender documentation and tender evaluation process
- Reviewing the status of the project
- Approving changes which deviate from the agreed overall project plan

9.3. Project Manager

The Project Manager will be Karen Roche, Consultant, retained by BFC and allocated to this project.

9.4. Project Team

Representatives appointed by the Berkshire Authorities will undertake the detailed tender evaluation. Other members of the Project team will include:

Rob Atkins	Head of Procurement
Claire Seymour	Senior Procurement Officer
Simon Heard	Asst Borough Solicitor

10. Advice Received from Other Officers

10.1 Finance Comments

Provided By: Paul Clark

The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that the proposed contract costs can be funded from the available budget.

10.2 Procurement Comments

Provided By: Rob Atkins

Incorporated in body of Procurement Plan.

10.3 Legal Comments

Provided By: Simon Heard

Incorporated in this procurement plan.

11. Change Control

If any major changes are required to this document it will be re-issued as a revision for approval. No additional work should be undertaken without approval by the Board.