

ITEM No ...5.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 10 JUNE 2024

REPORT ON: AWARD OF TENDER FOR SCOTTISH CITIES ALLIANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 164-2024

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Dundee City Council is asked to approve the appointment of Stripe Communications on behalf of the Scottish Cities Alliance (the Alliance) following the completion of a tendering process undertaken with the approval of the Alliance partners and in accordance with the Alliance's own governance arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

- a note steps taken by the Alliance Team to progress the procurement of Public Relations and Communications Support for the Alliance's Investment Promotion Programme to date in discussion with Dundee City Council procurement and in accordance with the Alliance's own governance arrangements;
- b delegate to the Head of Chief Executive's Service to finalise arrangements for the appointment of Stripe Communications for the provision of Public Relations and Communications Support for the Alliance's Investment Promotion Programme; and
- c delegate authority to the Chief Executive to make all future tender awards which relate solely to the work of the Scottish Cities Alliance, provided they have no financial implications for Dundee City Council.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Funding for the Alliance's Operational Programme 2022-2026 was approved by the Alliance partners in 2021 to run from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2026. This included annual funding to cover the procurement of Public Relations and Communications Support for the Alliance's Investment Promotion programme within the budget set for the tender.
- 3.2 The contract has a maximum annual budget of £52,500 and the Alliance will utilise both a schedule of professional rates as well as a price list of individual items such as case studies and opinion pieces to call upon the recommended supplier.

4. MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Scottish Cities Alliance is a partnership of Scotland's 8 city local authorities (Aberdeen City Council, Dundee City Council, Fife Council (Dunfermline), The City of Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council, Highland Council (Inverness), Perth and Kinross Council and Stirling Council) and the Scottish Government working in collaboration to attract investment and deliver sustainable economic growth in Scotland. The Alliance's strategic programme is overseen by the Leadership Group, which is chaired by Cllr John Alexander, Leader of Dundee City Council, and consists of the Leaders of the eight city local authorities and the Cabinet Secretary with a portfolio responsibility in the Scottish Government for cities, Kate Forbes MSP.
- 4.2 Funding for the Alliance's [Operational Programme 2022-2026](#) was confirmed by the Leadership Group in June 2021 to cover the employment of 5 officers (the Alliance Team) and the delivery of specific programme activity from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2026. The Alliance has [protocols](#)

in place which set out the procedures the partners and the Alliance Team will adhere to when carrying out activity in pursuance of the Operational Programme 2022-2026.

- 4.3 Since 1 October 2022, Dundee City Council have employed the Alliance Team. A Service Level Agreement is in place between Dundee City Council and the Alliance Partners covering the provision of:
- i) Financial Administration;
 - ii) Provision of Financial Systems;
 - iii) Procurement Services; and
 - iv) HR Services where relevant including recruitment.
- 4.4 Funding for the procurement of Public Relations and Communications Support was approved by the Alliance Leadership Group as part of the budget for the Operational Programme 2022-2026 approved in June 2021. The contract for the provision of existing Public Relations and Communications Support is currently overseen by Stirling Council under a historic arrangement.
- 4.5 In a move to harmonise the budget management arrangements of the Alliance, and as a result of the Alliance budget now being overseen Dundee City Council as part of the Service Level Agreement, the Alliance partners agreed that the Alliance Team should take steps to retender the provision of the Public Relations and Communications Support contract. There are no additional financial impacts of this arrangement or tender for Dundee City Council.
- 4.6 The Alliance team began discussions regarding retendering the Public Relation and Communications Support contract with Dundee City Council procurement team in summer 2023. The Alliance Team then took steps to ensure the Alliance Partners were cited on the procurement in line with the Alliance's Protocols and they were satisfied that sufficient funding was in place to cover the contract. The Alliance Team has: -
- i) ensured that the contract value is in line with the existing budget set for these services as per the Operational Budget approved by the Alliance's Leadership Group for the funding period 2022-2026;
 - ii) tabled and agreed the tender with officers on its Investment Promotion Working Group representing all cities and Scottish Government prior to instructing the tender; and
 - iii) ensured that there was broad scrutiny of the tender submissions. Lot 1 of the tender was scored by the Alliance Team as well as officers from Aberdeen City Council and Stirling Council. Lot 2 was scored by officers from the Alliance Team and Stirling Council.
- 4.7 The tender process has now completed and identified Stripe Communications as the preferred contractor for the next 2 years with the option to extend for a further 2 x 12-month periods. Following approval for the preferred contractor, a standstill period will be entered.
- The contract is split into two lots:
- A. Lot 1 – Media Engagement (including face-to-face and ad hoc events) - £40k
 - B. Lot 2 – Digital Engagement - £12.5k
- 4.8 Dundee City Council as a partner in the Alliance will benefit from the Public Relations and Communications Support provided by the contract as a result of its membership of the Alliance alongside the other city local authorities and the Scottish Government.
- 4.9 Given the processes and governance arrangements that the Alliance follows for the procurement of any services needed as set out in para 4.6 and the overall financial oversight by Dundee City Council, it is proposed that the Chief Executive be authorised to make all future tender awards.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services, or funding, so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

6 CONSULTATIONS

The Council Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GREGORY COLGAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

29 MAY 2024

ANDREA CALDER
HEAD OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICE

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