

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (on behalf of Northern Powerhouse 11)

INVITATION TO TENDER

FOR

Voice and Visibility

May 2022

Return Date of ITT: 7th June, 4pm



Contents

SECTION 1 - The NP11 Profile	3
SECTION 2 – Scope of Procurement	
SECTION 3 – Specification	4
SECTION 4 - Award Criteria	7
SECTION 5 – Submission requirements and timetable	8
SECTION 6 – Terms and conditions of tender submissions	11
APPENDIX 1 - FORM OF TENDER - TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED	14
APPENDIX 2 – PRICE SCHEDULE – TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED	16
APPENDIX 3 - SUPPLIER TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & ANSWER SHEET	17
APPENDIX 4 - CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT	19



SECTION 1 - The NP11 Profile

The Northern Powerhouse 11 (NP11) brings together the 11 Northern Local Enterprise Partnerships, working together for the North. The NP11 is a business-led body that works in partnership with civic leaders across the North and with Government to drive prosperity, improve lives and attract investment.

The NP11 has agreed a series of policy priorities to grow the North's economy, focusing particularly on clean growth, trade and investment, digital, place making and innovation. It has established a strong brand, digital presence, and public reputation.

SECTION 2 - Scope of Procurement

This procurement exercise is being conducted as a below threshold open tender.

The LEP, on behalf of the NP11, are looking to procure a strategic communications agency to support the NP11's voice and visibility objectives as it continues to build its profile across the North and nationally, from a high-quality provider that delivers a service that is demonstrably focused around the needs of The NP11.

This will include providing strategic and tactical PR, stakeholder engagement, public affairs and other support to help the NP11 deliver its policy priorities, influence Government, investors, business leaders and other key decision-makers in support of pan-Northern priorities, and position Northern business leaders as central to delivering on the Northern Powerhouse ambition of the North as a dynamic, innovative business location with a major role to play in driving UK prosperity beyond Brexit and COVID-19.

As well as devising and delivering this programme of strategic communications and engagement activity, a requirement of this brief is to provide a resource to coordinate wider communications activity related to the NP11 agenda, working with the NP11 executive team and LEP comms leads, and to maintain the NP11 website and social media channels.

This ITT sets out the information which is required in order to assess the suitability of bidders to meet the requirements of the NP11 for Voice and Visibility, in terms of their:

- Understanding of and ability to carry out the requirements of the brief
- Expertise and experience of delivering similar projects
- Approach and programme to complete the objectives
- Demonstrating innovative delivery, generation of ideas, and use of alternative channels/formats to widen reach
- Understanding of the NP11 and the political environment in which it operates
- Price

The successful bidder will be required to deliver services in accordance with all tender documents and the contract to be placed with the successful bidder. Tenderers are



requested to study the specification in detail and ensure that the specified requirements can be met and thus your understanding of our requirements is reflected in your Pricing Schedule return.

The contract is expected to commence **20**th **June**, with the exact dates to be agreed depending on the agreement between the successful provider and The LEP, on behalf of NP11.

The LEP wish to secure efficiencies and economies of scale by means of a procurement exercise for meeting the requirements detailed within this documentation. The principle benefits anticipated by The LEP in this procurement include;

- Ability to maximise opportunities for best value and efficient services
- To allow bidders to explore efficiencies, which may be possible by suggesting innovative and cost-effective solutions
- Presentation of cost savings to The LEP in order to maximise economical operational efficiency and value for money
- A resultant contract that meets the tender requirements and supports the LEP with their ambition

The Contract will be awarded for an initial period of 12 months, with an option to extend for another 12 months, subject to funding and based on satisfactory performance through continuous monitoring and performance review.

During the contract life, the successful bidder will need to achieve continuous improvement.

Failure to do so may result in the contract being terminated.

SECTION 3 - Specification

Through a programme of strategic and tactical communications activity, the overall aim of this project is to enhance the profile and visibility of the NP11, positioning it as the leading business-led body driving the realisation of the Northern Powerhouse ambitions.

The key objectives of the project are:

- **Media coverage and profile:** Deliver a measurable increase in media coverage of the NP11 and its work across the North and nationally; delivering a thought leadership piece per policy workstream, each with national media cut-through.
 - o Clean Growth
 - Trade and investment
 - Digital
 - o Place making
 - Innovation
- Stakeholder engagement: Using various on- and off-line channels, engage with northern business and civic leaders, MPs, central government decision-makers



and national business leaders to galvanise support for NP11 priorities and the opportunities they represent for national prosperity. Until September, this includes editing and designing of a weekly newsletter on COVID-19 impacts.

- **Public affairs:** Deliver a programme of PR and public affairs activity in response to key political milestones and developments, setting out a coherent set of northern asks and building support from key influencers
- Increased share of voice: Increase the NP11's share of voice significantly in relation to the Northern Powerhouse agenda, positioning it as the leading body driving forward this agenda
- Digital channel coordination: manage the NP11 website (which is hosted on Wordpress) and its social media channels (Twitter and Linked In), developing compelling and engaging digital content that achieves cut-through and supports overall strategic communications objectives
- Strategic coordination: provide dedicated, agile resource, envisaged at up to three days per week, to coordinate all NP11 strategic communications and digital activity for the NP11. Reporting to the NP11 executive team, this resource will ensure that:
 - messages across all channels are consistent and reinforce the NP11's agreed brand vision and identity
 - strategic and tactical communications opportunities are maximised across all channels
 - the NP11 is able to respond to reactive media and other communications opportunities at pace, positioning it as the "go-to" commentator on the Northern Powerhouse agenda
 - through coordination with NP11 communications leads, relevant local stories from individual LEPs are packaged together and pan-northern angles are exploited to clearly communicate the differences that LEPs are making across the North
 - o report on progress are provided on a monthly basis to the NP11 executive team and Board, including up to date dashboards and written reports, presenting at board meetings and attending meetings as required with NP11, Government and other partners.

Stakeholders:

Detailed stakeholder mapping has already been undertaken and will be refreshed as a result of this project, however broadly the primary audiences are:

- Businesses across the North (including intermediaries and trade bodies)
- Government
- Metro Mayors, civic leaders and MPs
- University and further education leaders
- Other public and third sector leaders
- National and international investors
- Northern residents



Opinion formers and influencers (including think-tanks and local, regional, national and trade media).

The key contact with day-to-day oversight of this project are David Levene, Director of NP11. There will also be a ned to liaise closely with the Chair of the NP11.

A sounding group of communications leads from across the NP11 LEPs will be brought together to provide advice and expert communications input to the project. Progress updates on the project will be submitted to the NP11 executive team for review and strategic direction at least monthly and additional reports will be brought to the NP11 Board at least quarterly.

Scope and exclusions:

The project includes all of the deliverables and technical requirements listed above plus any subsequently agreed (in writing) as part of project inception which will contribute to the objectives stated above.

The successful agency must demonstrate an appreciation of the budget limitations and political sensitivities within which the NP11 operates as a publicly funded body. Any proposals/ recommendations must represent cost-effectiveness and value for taxpayers' money.

Budget:

The maximum budget available for this project, including all of the deliverables listed above plus any associated expenses, is £75,000.

It is currently envisaged that the budget for the various elements of this project will break down broadly as set out in the following table. There is flexibility in this budget breakdown, however, if suppliers propose prioritising budget differently to achieve the specified aims and objectives. The overall project budget must not exceed £75,000.

A detailed breakdown of costs to deliver the requirements of this brief using your proposed approach is requested as part of your tender submission.

Development and delivery of strategic and tactical	£10,000 per policy area (x 5)
communications, PR and public affairs activity	
Maintenance of digital channels	£15,000
Strategic coordination of programme	£10,000
TOTAL	£75,000



SECTION 4 - Award Criteria

4.1 Award Criteria

The Contract will be awarded on the basis of the following weighted award criteria:

	Award Criteria	Weighting
4.1.1	Conformance to Specification	
	Submissions which do not, in the opinion of The LEP, adequately	PASS/FAIL
	meet the Performance Specification will not be marked for the	
	Technical Merit and Price Criteria outlined below and will not be	
	taken forward to any subsequent stages of the Tender	
	evaluation.	
4.1.2	Price	30%
4.1.3	Technical Merit (Quality)	70%
	TOTAL	100%

The **Technical Merit** criteria is made up of the following sub-criteria:

4.1.3.1	Understanding of and ability to carry out the requirements of the brief	15%
4.1.3.2	Expertise and experience of delivering similar projects	15%
4.1.3.3	Approach and programme to complete the objectives	20%
4.1.3.4	Demonstrating innovative delivery, generation of ideas, and use	5%
	of alternative channels/formats to widen reach	
4.1.3.5	Understanding of the NP11 and the political environment in which	15%
	it operates	

Technical scores from the Tender stage will then be added together to give a total technical score out of 70% which will then be added to the Price score (out of 30%) to give an overall score of 100%.

NOTE: If any criteria within the specification document are classed as non-compliant The LEP will not be able to take your tender through to the next stage. If, however, you state that you are non-compliant and are able to provide an alternative solution, the LEP reserve the right to consider the alternative solution. No guarantee will be given that the alternative solution will be accepted.



4.2 Scoring Principles

Submitted Tenders will be scored using the following points system principles:

Scoring criteria	Score
Failure to respond or irrelevant information which fails to meet the	0
requirement	
Response is inadequate, significantly failing to meet the requirements	1
Response is unsatisfactory partially meets the requirement	2
Response is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement	3
Response is good - better than merely acceptable	4
Response is excellent, exceeds the requirement and gives added value	5

Clarifications maybe sought in writing, or by interview/presentation from the suppliers and scores adjusted accordingly. Full or partial proposals that in the opinion of The LEP are unrealistically low or not reasonable sustainable (in terms of Quality or Price) may be rejected.

<u>SECTION 5 - Submission requirements and timetable</u>

5.1 Closing Date & Submission

The closing date and time for the receipt of submissions and all requested documentation relating to this stage is **16:00** hours **(4pm)** on **7**th **June**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions will only be accepted if they are returned via email to tenders@cheshireandwarrington.com Bidders should not send their completed submissions to/copy in any other email address.

Tenderers are advised that it is **compulsory** to complete and return <u>all</u> of the following documents in the format provided as per the instructions of this ITT. All questions must be answered, where a question does not apply please state "Not applicable". Failure to complete the documents in full and/or provide all documentation will result in a non-compliant tender submission and will mean that your tender is not considered.

- 1. Form of Tender Declaration (Appendix 1)
- 2. Pricing Schedule (Appendix 2)
- 3. Supplier Technical Questions & Answer Sheet (Appendix 3)



5.2 Tender Queries

If you have any specific questions concerning this document or the process for submission of your proposal, then please email through to: David.Levene@np11.org.uk no later than **24**th **May, 4pm**. Only questions submitted to this email address will be answered. Queries received after this date will not be accepted and will not be responded to.

It would be most helpful if queries could be submitted in one email rather than piecemeal. If any question or request for clarification is considered to be of material significance, both the question and the response may be issued for review by all potential providers in a suitably anonymous form via the LEP's website: Tenders - Cheshire and Warrington. All communication received from potential providers will be treated in strict confidence but are subject to this paragraph.

5.3 Proposed Schedule of Events

The proposed schedule for the procurement process is as follows. However, the dates indicated, except for the return date should be regarded as indicative at this stage as The LEP reserves the right to extend and / or amend the timetable as necessary. Any major changes will be communicated potential tenderers.

Activity	Date
Invitation to Tender (ITT) Live	10 th May
Deadline for queries	24 th May, 4pm
Tender submission deadline	7 th June, 4pm
Interviews (if determined applicable)	8 th – 10 th June
Evaluation of submissions	w/c 13 th June
Bidders notified of contract award	w/c 13 th June
Contract to start	w/c 20 th June

5.4 Instructions to tenderers

Bidders:

- Shall either destroy or return all documentation related to the tender process if The LEP so directs
- Shall ensure that tenders are both technically and arithmetically correct. Should
 The LEP discover any arithmetical errors in the bidder's tender prices then these
 shall be pointed out to the bidder who shall immediately correct the errors or they
 shall be asked to withdraw its tender or hold the prices submitted, at the discretion
 of The LEP



- Shall not alter the ITT documents. Tender proposals will be deemed to comply
 entirely with the terms stated therein unless the bidder states otherwise in writing.
 If any alteration is made or if these instructions are not fully complied with, the
 tender proposal may be rejected
- Will be deemed to have satisfied themselves as to the sufficiency of their tender proposal and to have included in it all costs which may be incurred in the delivery of the services. They shall also be responsible for satisfying themselves as to the accuracy of all information associated with the contract and that all eventualities have been included

The contract will be entered into on the basis of the total tender package (inclusive of VAT) which will be included as part of the Contract Documents including any amounts or additions made and agreed during the tender proposal assessment period. The LEP reserves the right not to contract or contract only in part with any bidder.

The information supplied within this ITT and accompanying documents reflects The LEP's current view of the services required. Whilst the information in this ITT has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive or to have been independently verified.

This ITT is issued on the basis that:

- The LEP does not accept any liability, responsibility or duty of care to any tenderer for the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of this ITT or for anything said or done in relation to the procurement to which this ITT relates;
- The LEP does not make any (express or implied) representation or warranty either about the information contained in this ITT or on which it is based, or about any written or oral information that may be made available to any bidder;
- Nothing contained in this ITT constitutes an inducement or incentive in any way to persuade an interested person to pursue its interest, submit a tender proposal or enter into any contract;
- Neither this ITT nor any information supplied by The LEP should be relied on as a promise or representation as to its future requirements;
- This ITT is neither an offer capable of acceptance nor is it intended to create a binding contract nor is it capable of creating such a contract by any subsequent actions

The LEP reserves the right to suspend, cancel or withdraw the tender process at any time and will not be responsible for any costs incurred to potential suppliers.



SECTION 6 - Terms and conditions of tender submissions

Please see below for the terms and conditions of this tender. Through submitting a bid on this tender, you are committing to meet and abide by these terms and conditions:

6.1 Confidentiality and Disclaimer

This ITT is not an offer capable of acceptance, but represents a definition of specific legal service requirements and an invitation to submit a response addressing such requirements.

Neither the issue of the ITT to you, your preparation and submission of a tender, or the subsequent receipt and evaluation of your tender by The LEP commits The LEP to award a contract to you or any other bidder, even if all requirements stated in the ITT are met. The LEP is not responsible directly or indirectly for any costs incurred by your firm in responding to this ITT and participating in The LEP's procurement process.

All firms shall keep strictly confidential any and all information contained in this ITT, and other information or documents made available to it by or on behalf of The LEP in connection with this ITT. The firms shall not disclose, nor allow any such information to be disclosed. Submission of a formal response to this ITT will confirm your agreement to observe these confidentiality requirements.

Contact by the firms with The LEP during the bidding process should only be via the contact stated within this ITT. Respondents shall not offer or give any consideration of any kind to any employee or representative of The LEP as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other contract with The LEP.

6.2 Material Misrepresentation

The LEP shall rely on the information provided by the bidder in relation to its offer. In providing the services as specified in the Invitation to Tender documents the successful bidder/tenderer shall comply with the contents of its offer as failure in this respect may constitute a material breach of contract.

6.3 Collusive Bidding

Collusive bidding is unacceptable to The LEP. Any tenderer that is caught by The LEP to be circumventing rules or the law during this tender process will automatically be disqualified from the tender process.

This applies to any bidder who:



- **a).** Fixes or adjusts the amount of his bid by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or
- **b).** Communicates to any person other than The LEP the amount or approximate amount of his proposal (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the tender for instance) or,
- **c)**. Enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other person* that he shall refrain from bidding or as to the amount of any bid to be submitted, or
- **d).** Offers or agrees to pay or give, or does pay or gives any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done, or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any Offer or proposed Offer for the Services or any act or omission will be disqualified (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to The LEP and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a bidder may attract)

*NB Sub-contracting is permissible where the bidder believes that this will enhance their proposal, however this must be clearly stated.

6.4 Bribery

Bribery means any offence under the Bribery Act 2010 or related Laws creating offences in relation to offering, promising or giving a bribe or requesting, agreeing to receive or receiving a bribe

The Contractor agrees with the Client that this Contract will operate on the basis of zero tolerance being shown towards any Fraud and/or Bribery. The Contractor shall take all reasonable steps, in accordance with Good Industry Practice, to prevent Fraud and Bribery by Staff and the Contractor (including its shareholders, members, directors) in connection with the receipt of monies from the Client and with the operation of this Contract.

6.5 TUPE

The following provisions regarding TUPE are extremely important. Please ensure that you read them carefully.

The LEP expects that TUPE will **not** apply to this contract.

In cases of TUPE Tenderers are advised to seek independent professional advice on the effect of TUPE. Tenderers must be prepared to accept all liabilities which may arise as a consequence of the application of TUPE, should it apply. The LEP takes no liability in regards to inaccuracy of TUPE information provided in this tender.

When submitting a Tender, Tenderers are required to include all costs relating to TUPE in their submission.



6.6 Data Protection Act Compliance

The successful bidder must comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and all applicable law concerning the processing of personal data and privacy. Full contract terms can be found within the terms and conditions (see Appendix 5).

The LEP privacy notice can be found at: https://cheshireandwarrington.com/privacy-policy/

6.7 Social Value

The LEP's vision to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK, closely aligns to the Government's social value priorities.

Under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 the LEP must consider:

- a) how what is being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area where it exercises its functions, and
- b) how, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

In addition, the National Procurement Policy Statement (National Procurement Policy Statement.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk) sets out the following national priorities that should be considered alongside individual local priorities:

- creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills;
- tackling climate change and reducing waste, and
- improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience.

All successful suppliers must be willing to work closely with the LEP throughout the contract duration to assist them in achieving both their vision and their social value obligations.



<u>APPENDIX 1 - FORM OF TENDER - TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED</u>

Declaration by Tenderer ITT Title: NP11 Voice and Visibility

- 1. I, [insert name], certify that I am the person duly authorised to sign tenders for and on behalf of [insert company name], the tenderer, and having read the documents, offer to supply the goods, services or works:
 - as set out in the specification and accompanying tender documents, samples and/or drawings
 - under the terms and conditions indicated
 - at the price (or prices) specified in the attached tender documentation
- 2. It is agreed that any or other terms and conditions of contract or any caveats, assumptions, reservations or exclusions that may be printed on correspondence emanating from the tender, or any Contract resulting from this tender, shall not be applicable to this tender or agreement.
- 3. I certify that this is a bona fide tender and that I have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender by, or under, or in accordance with any agreement with any other person. I have not done, and undertake that I will not do at any time before the hour and date specified for the return of the tender, any of the following acts:
 - Communicate to a person other than The LEP, the amount or approximate amount of the proposed tender, except where the disclosure, in confidence, of the approximate amount of the tender was necessary to obtain insurance premium quotations required for the preparation of the tender
 - Enter into an agreement or arrangement with any other person that he/she will refrain from tendering or to the amount of any tender to be submitted
 - Offer, or pay, or give, or agree to pay any sum of money or valuable consideration, directly or indirectly to any person for doing, or having done, or causing to be done in relation to any tender or proposed tender, for the said work, any act or thing of the sort described above
- 4. I further certify that the principles described in paragraph 3 have been, or will be, brought to the attention of all subcontractors, suppliers and associated companies providing services or materials connected with the tender and any contract entered into with the subcontractors, suppliers or associated companies will be made on the basis of the compliance with the above principles by all parties.



- 5. I understand that The LEP reserves the right, unless the tenderer stipulates to the contrary in the tender, to accept such portion thereof as The LEP may decide. The LEP is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.
- 6. I have obeyed the rules regarding confidentiality of tenders and will continue to do so as long as they apply.
- 7. I can confirm that I accept that any breach of any of the conditions could lead to any tender being rejected or to the rescission of the Contract by The LEP.

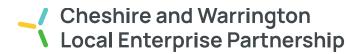
Authorised Signatory	
Date	
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	
Job Title	
Telephone Number	
E-mail address	

Please ensure that the form is completed and signed before being returned with any other supporting documentation requested, by the due date and time. Use the checklist to ensure that you have submitted the relevant documents.



APPENDIX 2 - PRICE SCHEDULE - TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED

	Year 1 (£)	Optional Year 2 (£)
Development and delivery of strategic		
and tactical communications, PR and		
public affairs activity		
Maintenance of digital channels		
Strategic coordination of programme		
TOTAL		



APPENDIX 3 - SUPPLIER TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & ANSWER SHEET - TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED

1. COMPANY DETAILS

Please provide company details within the table below:

Question	Question	Response
number		
1(i)	Full name of the potential supplier submitting	
	the information	
1(ii)	Registered office address (if applicable)	
1(iii)	Registered website address (if applicable)	
1(iv)	Trading status	
	a) public limited company	
	b) limited company	
	c) limited liability partnership	
	d) other partnership	
	e) sole trader	
	f) third sector	
	g) other (please specify your trading status)	
1(v)	Date of registration in country of origin	
1(vi)	Company registration number (if applicable)	
1(vii)	Charity registration number (if applicable)	
1(viii)	Head office DUNS number (if applicable)	
1(ix)	Registered VAT number	



2. Understanding of and ability to carry out the requirements of the brief (15%) ANSWER FEEDBACK 3. Expertise and experience of delivering similar projects (15%) ANSWER FEEDBACK 4. Approach and programme to complete the objectives (20%) ANSWER FEEDBACK 5. Demonstrating innovative delivery, generation of ideas, and use of alternative channels/formats to widen reach (5%) ANSWER FEEDBACK

6. Understanding of the NP11 and the political environment in which it operates

(15%)

ANSWER FEEDBACK



APPENDIX 4 - CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

The LEP contract for the Supply of Services shall form the basis of the main terms and conditions of the contract. The successful bidder must thoroughly read, agree and comply with the Contract Terms & Conditions Agreement.

Contractors Induction Checklist provided in tender documentation will form part of the contract.