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**Invitation to Tender for Research and Consultancy Services**

**C0617a: Adult and Community Learning Services in London**

**Context**

This project is being commissioned by London Councils. London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London’s 33 councils. We lobby for local governance for London boroughs, promoting their leadership of local communities and services and arguing for the tools necessary for them to do that job. We also act as a catalyst for effective sharing of practice, knowledge, information and services between boroughs.

London Councils is commissioning this work on behalf of the four sub-regional partnerships in London,[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). London boroughs, via sub-regional partnerships and London Councils, and the GLA have been working together on developing proposals for devolution and public service reform. These proposals cover a range of policy areas including adult skills. It is expected that the government will devolve the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Mayor from 2019/20 onwards. The GLA is working with boroughs, sub-regional partnerships and other stakeholders to develop a London Skills Strategy, part of which will inform the priorities for the devolved AEB.

In preparation for skills devolution and as part of a national programme, London government led the government’s Area Review process in the capital. This was completed earlier this year. London government also undertook a review of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) services and providers across the capital. This review ran in parallel to the area review. The purpose of the ACL review was to establish the long term strategic direction of post-19 adult and community learning provision, provide a comprehensive picture of adult education in London and develop recommendations for the commissioning and delivery of ACL provision in London post devolution. The ACL review covered all ACL services commissioned by London boroughs, five Institutes for Adult Learning (IALs)[[2]](#footnote-2) and a small number of other ACL providers.[[3]](#footnote-3) The review was completed in early 2017 and the full report can be found [here](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_adult_community_learning_review_report.pdf).

The government has also made changes to the funding for adult skills. Adult and Community Learning has previously been funded separately; however the Community Learning budget has now been merged with other funding streams as part of the overarching Adult Education Budget (AEB). This means that all providers, including FE colleges, can now provide Adult and Community Learning activity.

**Proposal**

Each sub-regional partnership has secured funding via the DfE’s transition grant to take forward recommendations from the ACL review in London. Sub-regions are pooling part of their grant to develop pan-London proposals for the role of ACL funding in London within a devolved skills system, to identify: how it can provide a distinct offer, the outcomes it should achieve and how ACL activity should be commissioned and funded. The work should build on and develop some of the recommendations from the ACL review and should help to inform the development of the London Skills Strategy, AEB Skills Funding Statement and AEB Commissioning Strategy.

This work should further develop the following recommendations from the London ACL review:

* *Recommendation 2.* As part of the Mayor’s strategy there should be an adult education strand that includes community-delivered adult education and skills.
* *Recommendation 3.* To underpin the strategy, a set of key pan-London policies should be developed.
* *Recommendation 6.* To improve understanding of Londoners’ needs, the GLA should collect relevant data and Labour Market Intelligence centrally via a strengthened data store
* *Recommendation 8.* The post-16 education and skills strategy should clearly state who should be the beneficiaries of public funding, which should include those: furthest away from work; in low paid employment; without basic skills and/or up to level 2; and/or with a health or wellbeing issue.

London local government is looking for additional independent support and expertise to work with us to:

* Identify a role and distinct focus for future ACL activity versus wider AEB funding delivered by FE colleges, boroughs and independent training providers, presenting a rationale for this and being clear how ACL fits into the wider employment and skills agenda. This should include identifying and prioritising the beneficiaries and activities of ACL provision, recognising the links to other key priorities for London such as social inclusion, health and well-being. The role and focus of ACL activity should be coherent and agreed at a pan-London level.
* Develop an approach for commissioning ACL services so that they are effective, address need and have clear and measurable impact. The approach should identify the outcomes ACL services in London should deliver; and, following from that, how funding could be allocated to ACL services in London. The approach should clearly show how it could demonstrate improved impact of funding for ACL.
* Identify what pan-London policies would be needed to support this approach.
* Identify the available data and Labour Market Information (LMI) needed to underpin and deliver this approach and how this could this be used in the commissioning process.

Providers will need to build on work already undertaken by some sub-regional partnerships in considering some of these issues for ACL and consider the emerging propositions that boroughs, IALs and sub-regional partnerships will be developing on how ACL might be delivered more strategically and effectively at a sub-regional level.

The details and precise nature of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Mayor from 2019/20 are still emerging and only likely to do so during the autumn. An initial draft of the London Skills Strategy will be developed during August 2017 and we expect the initial results of this work to inform the draft strategy. We therefore expect this work to be undertaken in two phases.

**Phase 1 (June/July 2017)** would identify the distinct role and focus of ACL activities and establish the principles and outcomes of a commissioning approach and get buy in from ACL providers and stakeholders to this broad approach.

**Phase 2 (August – October 2017)** would test and refine this – developing the detailed commissioning approach, as further information on the details and conditions around AEB devolution are agreed with government, and testing this with ACL providers and other stakeholders. It will also identify the data and LMI and pan-London policies needed to deliver this commissioning approach.

Getting broad agreement with ACL providers, as well other main stakeholders, to the proposed commissioning approach, is an important element of the project. The proposed commissioning approach for ACL provision and related proposals should be developed working with SRP and London borough officers, GLA and ACL providers – primarily the groups of boroughs/IALs working on the sub-regional elements of the ACL transition grant. The views of the FE sector should also be sought. This work will be overseen by a steering group made up of representatives from: the four sub-regional partnerships,[[4]](#footnote-4) London Councils, the GLA, Association of Colleges (AoC) London, a borough ACL provider and an IAL provider.

The final proposals should be presented as a short report and/or a set of slides.

**Methodology**

We will not be prescriptive about the methodology to develop the commissioning approach and related proposals but would expect the following products:

Phase 1:

* Assessment of the data collated for the ACL review and identification of any further analysis or data collection required (a summary of the data from the ACL review is attached at Appendix 1).
* A facilitated workshop with SRP, borough officers, GLA and ACL providers to develop and test the emerging proposals.
* A presentation or short report that identifies the role and focus of ACL activities and the principles and outcomes of a commissioning approach, with an underpinning rationale based on initial data analysis.

Phase 2:

* Further assessment of data if required, as identified during Phase 1;
* Facilitated workshops with the stakeholders listed above[[5]](#footnote-5) to refine and develop buy-in to the proposed commissioning approach and the supporting rationale;
* A presentation or report that details the proposed commissioning approach for ACL in a devolved skills system including: role and focus of ACL activities (its distinct offer); outcomes that ACL should deliver; proposed changes to the funding of ACL, including proposals to determine allocation between provider; a timetable for introducing this proposed approach; identification of pan-London policies and data and LMI requirements to support the approach and an underpinning rationale for these proposals based on data analysis.

The steering group will provide access to contacts with ACL providers and other stakeholders. Workshops can be hosted at London Councils or other stakeholders, subject to room availability.

The provider would be expected to give a number of presentations to the steering group, London Councils’ and sub-regional partnerships’ lead members for skills and other key stakeholders.

**Project Costs and Timetable**

This project is being included in the government’s Contracts Finder database to comply with recent changes in national procurement policy which specifies that any procurement opportunities and contract awards above certain low thresholds (£25,000) are published on [Contracts Finder](https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder).

Costs should be clearly presented and be inclusive of all fees, direct and indirect costs, expenses but exclusive of VAT.

You should indicate based on the timings below how you would envisage the project progressing based on your suggested methodology:

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| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | Date |
| Deadline for receiving tender | 12 June 2017 |
| Bidders informed of outcome | w/c 19 June 2017 |
| Contract awarded | w/c 19 June 2017 |
| Inception meeting | w/c 19 June 2017 |
| Draft proposals for Phase 1 submitted | 28 July 2017 |
| Draft proposals for Phase 2 submitted | 25 September 2017 |
| Final output | 20 October 2017 |

**Reporting Procedures and Project Management**

The project manager for this assignment is Dianna Neal;

We would expect regular updates on progress both to the project manager and the steering group for this project.

We expect to comment on all draft outputs and this should be reflected in your cost and time schedule.

Final outputs may be distributed internally and to key external stakeholders and made available on our websites.

**Tender Requirements**

We expect the providers have the following skills and experience:

* Expert knowledge and understanding of:
  + Commissioning and funding models for further education and adult and community learning both within the UK and internationally.
  + Typical groups and activities that are supported through adult community learning services.
  + Central government skills, education, community learning and devolution policy.
* Experience of developing new policy and models of commissioning, ideally within the vocational skills and/or education sector.
* Experience of presenting new policy and delivery models to experts as well local government officials and politicians.
* Knowledge of London regional and local government and London’s economic needs, including its key business sectors.

Providers should be able to give independent and expert advice and analysis and should not have a direct conflict of interest in the outcome of this project.

Bidders should provide the following information in their tender:

1. The size and nature of your organisation (if relevant) and your experience of directly relevant consultancy work
2. Your understanding of the aims and objectives of the project and how it interacts with the current policy context
3. An outline of your proposed methodology and approach to tasks outlined in this document
4. Experience of the individual(s), including their role on the project and tasks if relevant (CVs should be included separately in an annex, max 2 pages each)
5. Arrangements for project management, reporting and quality control
6. Research timetable with key milestones, including any risks that may affect the timing or delivery of outputs and contingencies
7. Clear structure of charges including day/hour rates, time spent on tasks, expenses. VAT will be paid at the applicable rate (an example of a clear cost structure is given in annex 2).

We will evaluate your response against the evaluation criteria given below.

70/30: 70% quality and 30% cost

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| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria – Quality [70% of the total]** | **Weighting [100%]** |
| 1. Understanding of the aims and objectives of the work, the policy context and key issues; specifically:  * The challenges and opportunities for ACL provision within the context of devolution and how it might change in the future * Understanding of robust, evidence-based commissioning and funding approaches, ideally within the vocational skills and education sector * Knowledge of the policy context of skills devolution at both a national and London government level * Knowledge of London regional and local government and London’s economic needs, including its key business sectors * How ACL is currently delivered and the main drivers for those delivery organisations | 25% |
| 1. Experience of undertaking similar projects, including:  * Expert knowledge of commissioning and funding models for further education and adult and community learning both within the UK and internationally * Experience of developing new commissioning and funding approaches and policy proposals, ideally within the vocational skills and/or education sector. * Knowledge of typical groups and activities that are supported through adult community learning services * Experience of working with local and regional government, sub-regions (or combined authorities) and skills/education providers * Experience of presenting new policy and delivery models to experts as well local government officials and politicians. | 30% |
| 1. A clear methodology and approach to the tasks set out in this document, including:  * How data collection and analysis will inform the development of funding and commissioning approaches * How the views of stakeholders will be sought and incorporated into this work and approaches to achieving board consensus to the project proposals * How to effectively develop robust, evidence-based commissioning and funding approaches, ideally within the vocational skills and education sector * A detailed, clear timetable for achieving the tasks within the overall timescale outline in this document. | 45% |

**Format of Tender Response**

If you wish to apply, **an electronic copy of your tender response with completed FOI and Equal Opportunities documents** (available on the website) should be sent to [tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk?subject=C0617a%20-%20ACL%20Project%20[insert%20organisation%20name%20here]) quoting reference number **C0617a** to arrive by **12pm on Monday 12 June 2017.** Bidders should ensure that they have received a confirmation email of receipt of tender by the deadline. **All submission documents should be provided in Microsoft Word format.**

If necessary, you may seek clarification on the procurement process or the specification by email to [Sorcha.Rooney@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:Sorcha.Rooney@londoncouncils.gov.uk). Enquiries will not be answered if received within **2** days of the date for submissions of tenders. Bidders should note that responses to each enquiry will be copied to all organisations bidding (though will not identify the originator of the enquiry) through the London Councils and Contracts Finder website.

If you are aware that the submission of your tender may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, please inform the officer to whom you are making the application.

***Full instructions to bidders are also provided in Annex One. Bidders are advised to read all instructions before submitting their tender.***

**Freedom of Information Act**

You should be aware that the information you submit may be subject to a request for information. The provision of any information to external parties by London Councils is determined by statutory conditions provided for in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Equality Opportunities**

The successful contractor will be required to comply with London Councils Equal Opportunity Policy and bidders should complete the Equal Opportunities Questionnaire with their tender submission.

**Terms and Conditions**

Please see accompanying terms and conditions and confirm acceptance in your submission.

**Annex One: Instructions to bidders**

1. **Tender Submissions** 
   1. All pages of the bidder’s tender should be sequentially numbered (including any annexes and supporting documents).
   2. Bidders are advised to submit tenders by email to [tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk?subject=C0617a%20-%20ACL%20Project%20[insert%20organisation%20name%20here]) quoting reference **C0617a.**
   3. The tender must not arrive later than the date and time stipulated. Tenders received after that time may not be considered unless the bidder can prove that the tender was dispatched in sufficient time to meet the deadline.
   4. By submitting a tender, the bidder agrees to keep that tender open for acceptance by London Councils for 90 days following the closing date.
   5. London Councils does not accept suppliers’ Terms and Conditions.
2. **Amendments to Tender Documents**
   1. Prior to the deadline, London Councils may modify the tender documents by amendments in writing. London Councils may extend the deadline for tenders to allow for significant amendments to be fully assessed and taken into account.
   2. The bidder may modify the tender prior to the deadline for receipt by giving notice in writing or by email.
   3. No tender may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
   4. The contractor may not transfer, assign or sublet the contract, or any part thereof, without the prior written consent of London Councils. If such consent is given the contractor will remain liable for the performance of the contract in it’s entirely as if such assignment or sublet had not taken place.
3. **Tender Charges**
   1. Charges must be in pounds sterling and be inclusive of all costs but can be exclusive of VAT.
   2. Charges shall be fixed for the duration of the Contract and will not be subject to any variation unless detailed in the Contract document.
   3. London Councils shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the production of the tender submission.
4. **Tender Evaluations**
   1. London Councils intends to commission the most economically advantageous tender and reserves the right to accept or reject all or any part of any tender.
   2. London Councils does not bind itself to accept the lowest charged tender.
   3. London Councils reserves the right to change the timing or any other aspect of the procurement process or to cancel the procurement process at any stage without prior notice.
5. **Intellectual property rights**
   1. All information provided by London Councils shall be treated by the Contractor as confidential except where prior written consent has been given by London Councils that such information may be disclosed. The dissemination of information within your organisation should be on a need-to-know basis.
   2. All intellectual property rights arising from the work will reside with London Councils.

**Annex Two: Example of cost structure**

**Example of cost table**

**Below is an example of a clear cost structure. Other cost breakdowns will be accepted; however a clear structure that will allow London Councils to easily assess value for money – including cost per stage and/or days/hours per person - should be used.**

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1. Central London Forward, Local London, South London Partnership and West London Alliance [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. City Lit; Mary Ward; Morley College; WEA; Working Men’s College [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Barnet & Southgate College; Richmond Adult Community College; The London Learning Consortium [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Central London Forward, Local London, South London Partnership and West London Alliance [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These workshops could form part of the wider consultation activity on the London Skills Strategy [↑](#footnote-ref-5)