**Facilitating the development of a new** **strategic plan for Libraries Connected**

**Libraries Connected: Invitation to Tender**

**Title**: Development of a new strategic plan for Libraries Connected

**Return to: i**nfo@librariesconnected.org.uk

**Deadline for receipt of tender proposals**: 9am 29 November 2021.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements for facilitating the development of a new strategic plan for Libraries Connected.

The plan will form the basis of our bid to ACE for funding as part of their National Portfolio.

The following details are outlined in this document:

* Background Information
* Objectives of this project
* The Brief
* The role of the successful applicant
* Contract Management
* Workplan and milestones
* Budget
* The terms of business relating to the award of any contract
* Process for submitting proposals
* Further Information
* Compliance

1. **BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Libraries Connected** [**www.librariesconnected.org.uk**](http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk)

Libraries Connected is a charity founded in 2018. It builds on 20 years’ experience as The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL). We are now partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for public libraries. We have a small team of staff and trustees. But we are proud to remain a membership organisation comprised of every library service in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Crown Dependencies.

Libraries Connected takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service.

***Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable, and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We work to promote the value of libraries, broker national partnerships, share best practice and drive innovation in the sector.***

Our annual reports summarise our achievements since 2018. <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5114389/accounts-and-annual-returns\>

**2.2 Our strategic plan**

Libraries Connected’s current strategic plan covers the period 2018-2022. It drove our transition from the member-led Society of Chief Librarians to a professional charity. It was also the core of our successful bid to join the ACE National Portfolio as the sector support organisation for public libraries in England.

The plan has been extended for a further year, 2022-23, in line with the extension of the ACE NPO funding round. Our focus in 2022-23 will be on consolidating our new organisation and preparing for the next four years through developing a suite of new strategies including for fundraising, environmental action and equalities.

We now need a new four-year plan for the period 2023-27 because:

* Our organisational capacities have developed markedly since 2018
* The context for our work has continued to evolve, accelerated by the pandemic and the additional development needs of library services
* We need to bid to ACE for renewal of our status as an NPO for the next four year cycle (2023-2027)
* The work of our partners has also evolved, and we need to refresh our relationships

**2.2 The library sector**

Our membership is the 177 public library services in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies.

We foster regional/national networks for these libraries, and also connect them nationally via our Basecamp communities.

During the pandemic libraries rapidly evolved their services to meet the heightened needs of their communities, as highlighted in research by Libraries Connected and Carnegie UK Trust: <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-pandemic-evolving-services-meet-local-need>.

In autumn 2020 we set out the key priority areas that libraries can support in relation to recovery from the pandemic: https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-essential-part-local-recovery

In the period ahead, Libraries Connected needs to focus on supporting ongoing service recovery and renewal, so that libraries can meet the evolved needs of their communities and benefit from new resourcing opportunities. We will use all the learning and development we have experienced over the last two years to develop a re-imagined library sector – growing the best of the past but also not going back. We will strengthen our advocacy work to build on the government’s new understanding about the vital role of libraries.

**2.3 Our partners**

Partnerships are fundamental to our work. We have long-standing relationships with a family of close partners including:

* Arts Council England
* The Association of Children’s and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
* BBC
* Booksellers Association
* Booktrust
* The British Library
* Carnegie UK Trust
* CILIP
* The Local Government Association
* National Literacy Trust
* The Publishers Association
* The Reading Agency
* Share the Vision

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT**

This project will develop a costed strategic plan for 2023-27 based on the needs and opportunities of the sector in line with our vision of an inclusive, modern, sustainable, and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK*.*

The plan will form the basis of our bid to ACE for funding as part of their National Portfolio 2023-37.

The new strategic plan should:

* build on the strengths of our work since 2018, and address gaps in our activities
  + - provide a framework for our activity across the four years, identifying where we can make most effective use of our resources to make a measurable difference
    - help clarify our relationships with key partners and how we can best work together in the interests if the library sector
    - form the basis of our funding bid to ACE, to be a Sector Support Organization for English public libraries
    - should address the needs of the library sector across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Crown Dependencies

Libraries are embedded in their communities and form a vital part of our social infrastructure. The contractor will need to set the development of the strategic plan within a societal context, and be able to demonstrate their understanding of this within the tender.

1. **THE BRIEF**

We are seeking expert contractors to support our Board to develop:

* A new costed strategic plan for 2023-27
* A funding bid to ACE, to be part of their National Portfolio 2023-27

The work will be driven by our **Board of Trustees**. The contractor will:

* Deliver two workshops with the Board first to set the strategic framework, and the second one to develop the plan in response to the findings of the consultation.

Our **expert staff team** will also be integral to the plan’s development. The contractor will:

* Deliver two staff workshops to build on the work of the Trustee workshops, by looking at the operational detail.

We want the strategy to be defined by the **development needs of our members**. The contractor will:

* Deliver a programme of consultation with our members. We envisage this will include a variety of channels, including workshops and surveys

We also want the strategy to define **how we work with our family of partners**. The contractor will:

* Facilitate discussions with our key partners to identify how we will work together to deliver the strategy
* Identify new partnerships we need to forge

Our strategy must respond to the **ambitions of the key stakeholders** for libraries. The contractor will:

* Deliver a programme of consultation with library stakeholders.
* We envisage this will be through a variety of channels including desk research and targeted interviews.

The contractor will collate and synthesize findings from the consultation with members, partners and stakeholders to produce a report for our Board which will be the basis of the second Board workshop.

1. **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The contract will be directly managed by the Chief Executive of Libraries Connected.

The selected organisation will report into the Strategic Plan Development Group, composed of Trustees and staff of Libraries Connected.

1. **WORKPLAN AND MILESTONES**

We envisage the project will follow this workplan, but proposals can set out an alternative timetable to meet the brief.

**Overall programme plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity | Time Period |
| Invitation to Tender | Nov 2021 |
| Clarifications published | W/b 22 Nov 2021 |
| Closing date | 9am 29 Nov 2021 |
| Appointment of successful contractor | Dec 2021 |
| Planning, including an initiation meeting with the Strategic Plan Development Group, agreeing a project plan, and milestone moments through the project | Dec 2021 |
| First Board and Staff workshops: to set the strategic parameters | Jan 2022 |
| Consultation with library sector, stakeholders and partners | Jan-Feb 2022 |
| Consultation report presented to Board | 22 Feb 2022 |
| Second Board and Staff workshops to develop detail of the plan | Mar 2022 |
| Develop strategic plan | Feb – Mar 2022 |
| Draft of plan presented to Board | 15 Mar 2022 |
| Finalise the strategic plan for sign off by Board | 15 Mar – 15 Apr 2022 |
| Submit plan and funding bid to ACE | Deadline 26 Apr 2022 |

1. **BUDGET**

A maximum of 25k is available for this project inclusive of VAT and all Contractors’ expenses.

1. **THE TERMS OF BUSINESS RELATING TO THE AWARD OF ANY CONTRACT**

Payment at key milestones in two Instalments subject to satisfactory delivery of programme phase and report to the Project Board

1. **PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**
   1. **Procurement timetable**
   * Submission by 09:00 on 29 Nov 2021
   * Award selection process completed by mid December.
   1. **Proposal submission**

Please submit proposals by email to info@librariesconnected.org.uk

Proposals must be submitted by 09:00 hours 29 Nov 2021

Proposals should be no more than 2500 words and should include

Understanding of the brief

An outline methodology for achieving the brief

A statement of your skills and experience in context of this brief including names and experience of each person assigned to the project. Examples and links to relevant reports you have written or contributed to should be included

An outline work plan and timetable for this work

A clear breakdown of costs which includes all rates, fees, and expenses you are anticipating for the project. If you are VAT registered this must be included in your costings

A statement showing understanding of and commitment to the values of Libraries Connected <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/about-us>

Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of your suitability to work on this project

* 1. **Evaluation of proposals**

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CRITERIA | WEIGHTING |
| Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief | 25 |
| Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including experience of running consultation processes and strategic planning | 25 |
| Quality of methodology | 25 |
| Proposed team composition and management | 15 |
| Cost (Value for money) | 10 |

1. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Libraries Connected Chief Executive [Isobel.hunter@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:Isobel.hunter@librariesconnected.org.uk)

**COMPLIANCE**

Libraries Connected reserves the right to disqualify any provider’s response to this ITT if it does not fully comply with the requirements contained therein. This is particularly relevant in relation to the stated closing date and time of applications.

Libraries Connected is not responsible for and will not pay for any expenses or losses you incur during, but not limited to, the application preparation, visits, negotiations, or interviews in relation to this procurement process. It is your responsibility to ensure that any consortium member, sub-contractor, and adviser abide by the conditions set out by Libraries Connected.

In submitting a response to this ITT, it will be implied that you accept all the provisions of this ITT including these conditions.

If Libraries Connected needs to change any information contained within this ITT before the closing date, you will be written to advise you of these changes, which includes the extension of any submission deadlines. Libraries Connected reserves the right to cancel or suspend this ITT process at any time but will notify you in writing as soon as possible if this occurs.

It is expected that the contractor will work within the values and behaviours of Libraries Connected and this will be part of the contract of engagement.