

Invitation to tender

Title: London Libraries: Shaping London's Libraries – a tender to work with London Libraries' to set direction, priorities and a business plan for key stakeholder engagement

Return to: fiona.tarn@camden.gov.uk including Shaping London Libraries ITT in the subject header.

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 5.00pm 15th August

1.Introduction

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements of producing a business plan for London Libraries which articulates direction and priorities for the next 3-5 years in such a way it aligns London Libraries with the direction of key stakeholders in the region such as the GLA and unlocks the potential that corporate social responsibility might offer and other untapped sources of support and partners maximising the funding potential for London Libraries.

The following details are outlined in this document:

- Background information
- Objective: What next for London Libraries?
- Contract management
- Workplan and milestones
- Budget
- The terms of business relating to the award of any contract
- Process for submitting proposals
- Further Information
- Compliance

2.Background Information

2.1About Us – London Libraries

London Libraries, a membership organisation, is the London region of Libraries Connected and includes all 32 boroughs and the City of London. Governance of London Libraries is through an Executive group consisting of up to 12 heads of library services and receives advisory support from the Regional Development Leads from Libraries Connected and a representative from Arts Council England.

The Executive group meet four times a year and these discussions then inform the London Libraries General meetings where a representative from each library service across London can attend to receive updates, hear from invited guests and discuss matters arising.

We work collaboratively to promote London's public library network and deliver regional campaigns, projects and events. The network is the largest public library network of any city in the world with over 300 libraries and over a million active borrowers. The latest annual report for 2023/24 can be found at <https://ldnlibraries.org>

London Libraries has a constitution which will be shared along with this invitation to tender. Within that constitution it articulates that London Libraries:

- lead the delivery of strategic plans for the London region through collaboration, shared services, peer support and mentoring
- promote and encourage co-operation between London's libraries to ensure effective provision of and access to services, and effective advocacy and promotion of libraries.
- work with other relevant bodies to strengthen the work of London Libraries

London Libraries received LibraryOn funding from the British Library and Arts Council England to develop a ReadOn app to encourage Londoners to rediscover the joy of reading. London Libraries have a great history of collaborating on projects, for example the Cities of Stories project which featured in every London library service. The network is progressive always seeking ways to work together to deliver for and with residents of London including joint funding applications to enable this. Each year the London Libraries network has a staff conference where team members from across London Libraries come together and the network has developed an updated its website <https://ldnlibraries.org>

2.2Context in London

There is a differentiation across the network in terms of challenges and demands, but many of these are common in London including:

- the perception and promotion of public libraries by a range of stakeholders;
- funding;
- homelessness;
- supporting refugee families;
- climate action;
- AI and misinformation and the sector's role in information literacy;
- impact of the service they are delivering in terms of social impact and the data to demonstrate their cross cutting relevance;

- income generation; and
- the infrastructure that supports us to deliver e.g. eBook licensing and library management system capability.

London Libraries are a strong network, but we are time poor with heads of service that are stretched in their day jobs but with the passion and commitment to want to make a difference across London in a cohesive and strategic way.

3.Objective: What next for London?

3.1The work

London Libraries would like to work with an external facilitator to help us think about and develop a business plan for London Libraries' focusing on direction and priorities over the next 3-5 years with dedicated sessions with the Executive group and with the wider membership. We need support to consider our strengths, opportunities, challenges and strategies to meet the challenges outlined above and advocate to key stakeholders who can support London Libraries to deliver against these challenges.

London Libraries are looking for a consultant/organisation to help shift our visibility with decision makers through a prioritisation of our potential workstreams to drive forward the key ones that will have most impact re their thinking, and then to have assessed where and to which bodies focussed messaging needs to be directed.

Considering the challenges noted earlier to work with the group and relevant stakeholders to analyse how we optimise the power of the network and maximise the collective impact on these challenges and connect with key stakeholders and their priorities such as the GLA.

We would like you to scope out your approach and the associated costs of supporting London Libraries with this piece of work in the context of a time poor but committed group. Including who you think should be part of the discussion with the Exec group and your approach to the sessions so that we have a plan to help us reach this goal - "Everyone understands the impact London Libraries make and the value of libraries to our communities and wants to invest in this'.

3.2Key objectives

- To identify and help broker relationships with regional and sub-regional organisations that have most potential to bring funding opportunities through e.g. corporate social responsibility, grant funding, tender opportunities that align with library sector delivery, or commissions to target 2-3 campaigns

- Identify the 2-3 key campaigns for London Libraries to focus on for the next 3 years that tie to the policy areas and themes that fit with the key stakeholders' funding priorities
- Support to initiate the business plan, facilitate meetings and pitches to these organisations for these campaigns and associated funding

3.3Outputs

- Key decision maker stakeholder mapping resulting in a list of key organisations across the region that have most potential for funded partnerships / commissions which best match London libraries' potential to support, together with their priorities for funding. This should include specific contacts within the health sector, economic partnerships, major local businesses (CSR); and GLA

A recommendation on how best to go about implementing the new strategy and garnering member engagement to drive this strategy and associated marketing campaign forward and with what sort of resource over and above members themselves.'

- Collated list of priority policy areas and themes that libraries could support. The 2 or 3 campaigns mentioned above
- Collection and professional presentation of data and evidence and messaging to show the impact libraries can have in these areas, drawn from data collected by London Libraries, national data (ACE), local and national case studies etc.
- A London Libraries business plan for the next 3-5 years and material to pitch and advocate to the relevant stakeholder

4.Requirements

- Track record, relevant experience, preferably sectoral experience of working with key potential stakeholders such as the GLA etc.
- Commercial mindset
- Desk research capability
- Excellent interpersonal skills to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders
- Able to commit to and deliver to time and within budget
- Excellent understanding of the public sector policy landscape pertinent to the region
- Good understanding of how & where commercial organisations use their CSR

4.1Background

- London Libraries annual report and constitution

- Local authority funding crisis and increased need for services have highlighted the need for funding diversification and sustainability at regional level
- London Libraries interest in developing work on benchmarking and measuring social value
- Previous unsuccessful attempts to secure traction with key stakeholders such as the GLA
- Aspiration to mirror Libraries Connected national at a regional level in terms of advocacy with key stakeholders and brokering funding partnerships at scale
- A time poor but committed network of leaders

5.Contract Management and governance

The contract will be managed by the London Libraries Executive Committee. The work will be reviewed and signed off by the London Libraries Executive Team.

6.Workplan and Milestones

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

Overall time period: September 2025 to March 2026.

Please note London Libraries staff conference is on Friday 19th September and ideally we will want the successful contractor to participate at this session.

Appointment of successful contractor	Friday 5 th September
Discovery and Insight phase	
An initiation online meeting with the LL Working Group, agreeing scope of commission, project plan, milestone moments and data management through the project and session at the conference	w/b 8 th September – online meeting
Attend LL Conference in person and deliver a workshop (City of London Guildhall)	Friday 19 th September
Desk research and data collation including existing reports; best practice across the sector national and international and prep for in person workshop with LL Exec	October
Strategic Workshops; synthesis and business plan	

In person workshop with LL Exec	Tuesday 16 th December
Draft business plan and share with LL Exec	January 2026
Revise based on feedback and prepare a workshop session online at LL General meeting	January /February 2026
Revise and present final version of business plan to LL Exec	February / March 2026
Support LL Exec to initiate the business plan, facilitate meetings and pitches to key stakeholders	March 2026

7.Budget

A budget of £3,000-£5,000 has been set aside for this project inclusive of VAT and all expenses. Any travel, accommodation, sustenance, and any other reasonable costs incurred by the tenderers as part of project should be costed in the overall budget. London Libraries will absorb localised costs such as catering; venue hire for the in-person workshop element of this project.

8.The terms of business relating to the award of any contract

Payment at key milestones in three instalments subject to satisfactory delivery of objectives.

9.Process for submitting proposals

9.1Procurement timetable

- Submission by **5.00pm 15th August**
- Award selection process completed by 5 September 2025

9.2Proposal submission

Please submit proposals by email to fiona.tarn@camden.gov.uk 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
- Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of your suitability to work on this project

9.3 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

10. Further Information

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Fiona Tarn Fiona.tarn@camden.gov.uk Head of Libraries for LB Camden and Chair of London Libraries

11. Compliance

London Libraries 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. London Libraries 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 London Libraries. In submitting a response to this ITT, it will be implied that you accept all the provisions of this ITT including these conditions. If London Libraries 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. London Libraries 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 London Libraries, and this will be part of the contract of engagement

London Libraries Exec Group