**Facilitating the development of a new shared** **Workforce and Skills Strategy for Public Libraries**

**Libraries Connected: Invitation to Tender**

**Title**: A Workforce and Skills Strategy for Public Libraries

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

**Deadline for receipt of tender proposals**: 02 07 2021 (18:00 hours)

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements for facilitating a new **Workforce and Skills Strategy for Public Libraries** jointly commissioned and owned by Libraries Connected and CILIP.

The [Public Library Skills Strategy](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cilip.org.uk/resource/resmgr/cilip_new_website/plss/plss_july_2017_final.pdf) 2017-2030 was developed as a partnership between CILIP, the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) with Arts Council England. The action plan accompanying the strategy recommended a review after five years. However, we believe the pace of societal change over the past three years; cultural challenge, the seismic disruptions to public life caused by Covid-19 and the needs of public libraries require a completely new public library workforce strategy that will meet the new and future needs of a diverse library service workforce and the communities they serve.

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.***

**2.2 CILIP** [**www.CILIP.org.uk**](http://www.CILIP.org.uk)

Established in 1898 under Royal Charter, CILIP is the UK library and information association. CILIP is the only chartered body in the world dedicated to uniting, supporting, and advocating for information professionals and librarians. CILIP has ten thousand individual members and one hundred and forty organisation members. Membership is open to everyone working in libraries, data, information or knowledge management or a related professional role. CILIP works with employers, learning providers and suppliers across the library and information sector in the UK and internationally to develop talent, promote innovation, encourage workforce diversity and ultimately to secure the long-term future of the profession. CILIP created and maintains the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB).

***Our mission is to put library and information skills and professional values at the heart of an equal, democratic, and prosperous society.***

CILIP is writing a revised Workforce Development Strategy for the library, information and knowledge profession as a whole, setting out CILIP’s commitments to this support this important area of work. The revised CILIP Workforce Development Strategy will inform the next CILIP Strategic Plan. A draft will be complete by September 2021 for the CILIP Board to comment on. Following any revisions, it will be published December 2021 ready for implementation from 2022.

**2.3 The Public Library Skills Strategy was launched in 2017,**

It set out 9 aims for developing the public library workforce of the future, and a framework of skills that local staff, leaders, specialists, and managers need to deliver effective library services. The framework is linked to the CILIP PKSB (Professional Knowledge and Skills Base) the framework that sets gold standard professional skills and knowledge for the profession, centred on a framework of ethical principles. A revised version of the PKSB will be released during 2021 reflecting the needs of the current and future workforce.

**2.4 The public library workforce**

In **2015** CILIP published the first comprehensive cross-sector mapping of the UK information workforce. This mapping and previous research highlight a number of key challenges and opportunities:

* An ageing workforce – 45% of the current library and information workforce will reach retirement age by 2030
* A lack of ethnic representation – 97% of the UK library and information workforce self-identify as white (compared to 88% in the population)
* A gender pay gap – the library and information workforce is 79% female and 21% male, yet 47% of top earners in the profession are men

Meeting these challenges means building a thriving workforce for the future, attracting, retaining, and developing talent and sustaining the creation of high-quality jobs which make use of our broad range of skills.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT**

*“We’ve got to make sure we look at staff skills in a completely different way to deliver a layered service and be as adaptable and flexible as possible” Bruce Leeke Suffolk Libraries*

In the past three years the environment in which libraries operate has changed dramatically – Brexit has become a reality, the death of George Floyd has confronted us with the urgent need to address systematic racism and unconscious bias, social mobility has declined and the child poverty gap has increased. Two pieces of research by [Carnegie UK Trust](https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/future-of-public-libraries/) and [Libraries Connected](https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-lockdown-connecting-communities-crisis) about the impact of libraries during lockdown have provided us with an improved understanding of the skills library staff are increasingly going to use in a post-Covid-19 world. For example the need for new and creative digital skills and the fundamental importance of customer service skills in supporting communities.

*“Some of the specialist outreach services implemented by local authorities in lockdown required or mirrored the core skill set that library staff utilized day to day pre-covid 19” Carnegie UK*

As a result, we believe that the new Workforce and Skills Strategy for Public Libraries needs to be a practical, progressive and future facing strategy to ensure that the skills and knowledge of library staff keep pace with a fast-changing society. And that it should effectively support heads of service to find, retain and develop the talent they need to drive their services forward.

1. **THE BRIEF**

1: To create a practical tool

* The new strategy should be a practical too, used by public library leaders to analyse their skill bases and skills gaps of their workforce.
* It should enable them to plan to develop their staff.
* It should help the sector to attract a new workforce and support succession planning, progression planning and career development.

2: Which includes the whole workforce

* The strategy must reflect the needs of a diverse workforce and a diverse community.
* It must recognize and support the needs of the staff who want to build their careers in public libraries and those who want to do best job possible in their existing roles,
* There are now more people coming in from non-library school routes, who need a solid grounding in the ‘what, why and how’ of libraries and this strategy should support public library leaders to offer this.
* It should recognize the needs of the wider ‘workforce’ including volunteers, apprentices etc.
* The strategy should embed the new inclusive definition of professionalism and ethics throughout the workforce.

3: Which sets the public library workforce skills needs of employers in the context of the wider

sector skills standard and training provision (the ‘virtuous link’ between skills needs and

supply)

* The strategy should include a public library guidance piece to translate the PKSB content into the experience of public library staff.
* It should translate the CILIP Ethical Framework into practical work-based public library examples.

4: The new strategy should:

* Actively support a thriving, diverse public library workforce with a wide variety of background and competencies.
* Support a building sense of professional unity, so that different parts of the workforce can benefit from knowledge exchange and sharing skills and experiences.
* Create improved open pathways for anyone to pursue a career in libraries and to be supported by their employer.

1. **THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT**

The role of the successful applicant will be to:

* facilitate the creation of the new shared Workforce and Skills Strategy for public libraries.
* Carefully gather, co-ordinate and reflecting the interests and views of the key stakeholders and partners to shape content.
* Produce a strategy which will identify the significant skills required for a public library workforce, including both the core skills sets required by the work force and identify areas of specialist knowledge that library staff need for example to support specific communities or customer groups; and the skills, ideas, behaviours, and competencies needed to support digital development.
* Bring together some key workforce development channels and opportunities that heads of service can draw upon to develop the skills of their workforce.

This should include:

* consultation with public library partners, Heads of library Services and stakeholders.
* consultation with diverse groups of library staff throughout the public library workforce.
* consultation with relevant library and information sector partners beyond the Public Library Sector.
* working with the Project Governance Group to develop a workforce engagement plan to ensure the new plan is used effectively and extensively.
* recommending a monitoring process.

The proposals should also be to be informed by:

* CILIP’s Professionalism Definition, Ethical Framework, sector skills standard, the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB) and new workforce strategy (due 2021).
* The findings of the Libraries in Lockdown Carnegie research and the Libraries Connected research
* Arts Council England’s new 10 year strategy *Let’s Create*
* The leadership principles enshrined within the 21st Century Public Servant
* In addition the review should include a  small value for money scoping exercise to explore available learning platforms

1. **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The contract will be directly managed by a project manager from Libraries Connected in partnership with CILIP

The selected organisation will report into the Project Governance Group which will comprise members of Libraries Connected, CILIP, Arts Council England; *DCMS; LGA*

There will be a phased sign-off process to allow all partners to ensure sign off by their respective Boards.

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 | June 2021 |
| Clarifications published | W/b 28 June 2021 |
| Closing date | 2 July 2021 |
| Appointment of successful contractor | July 2021 |
| Planning, including an initiation meeting with the Project Board, agreeing a project plan, and milestone moments through the project | August 2021 |
| consultation | July-October 2021 |
| Initial proposals | October-December 2021 |
| Final report and recommendations signed off | February 2022 |

1. **BUDGET**

A maximum of 20k 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 2 Instalments subject to satisfactory delivery of programme phase and report to the Project Board

1. **PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**
   1. **Procurement timetable**
   * Submission by 18:00 on 2 July
   * Award selection process completed by mid July
   1. **Proposal submission**

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

Proposals must be submitted by 18:00 hours 02 July 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

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 understanding of evaluating workforce development programmes, policy, and strategy with a particular focus on understanding diversity in leadership and supporting the wellbeing of leaders | 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 Programme Manager [sarah.mears@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:sarah.mears@librariesconnected.org.uk);

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.