

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Ltd PR agency recruitment tender document February 2018

Tender headlines:

Recruitment of retained PR agency support from April 2018 to April 2019 inclusive.
Through a retained contract, promote a narrative of Oxfordshire being a key driver behind 'UK PLC' and as a strategic stronghold/'world-class' asset for the UK economy.
Build-on and further develop key stakeholder relationships with high-level influencers at a national and international level.
Promote our vision for Oxfordshire as a: '<i>vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world-leading economy</i>' through creative and integrated campaigns.

1. OxLEP background

The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) was launched in March 2011. We are one of 38 LEPs in England and we are responsible for championing and developing Oxfordshire's economy.

In recent years – we have made considerable progress in strengthening Oxfordshire's economy by establishing robust and effective relationships between businesses, academia and the public sector.

We act as an informed, independent advocate for those driving innovation and growth across the county and – through our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire – we prioritise key programmes that build dynamic economic growth.

Our highlight achievements to-date includes:

- We have secured in excess of £200 million-worth of central government funds for the Oxfordshire economy

- We have supported the creation of around 40,000 new jobs over the past five years – representing close to 50% of a 2031 target of 85,600 new jobs
- We secured £142.5m for Oxfordshire through the Local Growth Fund 1, 2 and 3 – funded projects include; the Oxfordshire Flood Risk Management Scheme and Oxpens development programme in Oxford city centre
- We have secured £55.5m for Oxfordshire through the City Deal Fund – funded projects include; the Harwell Innovation Hub, Culham Advanced Manufacturing Hub and Begbroke Innovation Accelerator

Our vision is to see:

‘Oxfordshire as a vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence.’

2. OxLEP today

Today – we continue to build-on several years of success, championing the Oxfordshire economy and securing funding (from a variety of channels) for many projects benefitting the international, national and local economies.

We have created of three new distinct areas to our work:

- OxLEP (*corporate services – strategy, projects and funding*)
- OxLEP Skills (*apprenticeships, work experience and linking business with education*)
- OxLEP Business (*growth hub, inward investment and innovation support for business*)

The rationale behind this move is to:

- Increase awareness of OxLEP
- Increase awareness of OxLEP’s expertise and connections with multiple sectors
- Increase awareness of OxLEP with recognised key audiences

3. The Oxfordshire economy

We continue to reaffirm a world-leading economic position, with many international and national research papers highlighting the success of our county's economy – this includes:

Growth:

- Oxford has the second fastest-growing economy of all UK cities (*Irwin Mitchell report - autumn 2017*)
- Oxford is one of the two highest-performing cities in the UK, in relation to growth (*PWC's 'Good Growth for Cities' report - autumn 2017*)

Industrial space:

- Oxfordshire's industrial market is thriving – recording highest half-year figures for business space demand since 2013 in October 2017 (*Bidwells report*)
- Oxfordshire is the most successful LEP at attracting office occupation in England (*CoStar Group report - autumn 2017*)

Smart cities:

- Oxford is one of the top 10 smart cities anywhere in the UK (*Juniper Research report - October 2017*)

Small business:

- Between 2010 and 2016, Oxford businesses grew on average by 20.1%, with businesses boasting a five-year survival rate of 48.6% during the same period - some of the highest scores anywhere in England and Wales (*ONS report - November 2017*)
- South Oxfordshire has one of the highest five-year 'survival rates' for SMEs anywhere in the UK (*Nesta's 'State of Small Business' report - October 2017*)

Inward investment:

- Oxford is one of only two non-London Boroughs in the UK's top-10 for inward venture capital investment (*Nesta's 'State of Small Business' report – October 2017*)

4. Project details

The recruited PR agency will work with us to deliver the following priorities:

- Lead-on the development of a compelling story about Oxfordshire's economic strengths and take this narrative to international and national audiences, with a view to influence key

decision makers (*topics include; the Oxford-Cambridge Corridor, inward investment and innovation, and the Oxfordshire Growth Deal*)

- Working under the guidance of our in-house Communications Manager – create a comprehensive narrative that:
 - Promotes Oxfordshire as a key driver behind ‘UK PLC’
 - Promotes Oxfordshire as strategic ‘stronghold’ of the UK government
 - Promotes Oxfordshire as a ‘world-class’ asset for the UK economy
- Build-on and further develop key stakeholder relationships with high-level influencers at a national and international level (including private and public sectors)
- Work with the in-house Communications Manager to partner with key PR counterparts – across Oxfordshire’s private and public sectors – to develop ‘one voice’ for Oxfordshire’s strategic assets
- Identify key opportunities – both proactive and reactive – that communicates Oxfordshire’s economy in a positive light

5. Project budget

A maximum budget of £40,000 (exclusive of VAT) will be available for this contract, over a 12-month period. We would expect a contract proposal that is at least 12 months in length.

We believe this budget will allow the preferred agency to meet project expectations.

6. Expected experience of recruited PR agency

Specific criteria – outlining the recruitment of the selected agency during the interview process – can be found in section 7. However, broadly-speaking we would hope to attract responses from the following types of agencies:

- Those with a significant reach into international and national influencers, specific to our work
- Those with experience of working with central government and other government departments

- Those with a strong experience of B2B communications
- Those with a strong understanding of the Oxfordshire economy and our key assets
- Those with a strong understanding of Local Enterprise Partnerships and our responsibilities, as set by central government

7. Tender process

The table below outlines key dates relating to the tendering process.

We aim to have commissioned this project to a preferred agency on **Friday 23 March**. Interested agencies should submit tender responses by: **Friday 2 March (5pm)**.

Key dates are as follows:

Monday 12 February	Tender document launched on OxLEP website and publicised accordingly
Friday 2 March (5pm)	Closing date for tender responses
Monday 12 March	All agencies who responded to be notified of success/non-success of tender response – a minimum of three agencies to be shortlisted for face-to-face interviews
w/c 19 March	Shortlisted agencies interviewed by OxLEP panel
Monday 26 March	Winning agency and unsuccessful agencies to be notified

Please note – the contract for the incumbent agency retained by OxLEP will end on 3 April 2018. Therefore, the winning agency would be expected to begin their support of OxLEP immediately following this date.

8. Selection process, appraisal and scoring

All submitted proposals and the interview process for shortlisted agencies will be scored against a set of pre-determined criteria, outlining OxLEP's requirements from a partner agency.

Proposals should include information that outlines the following details:

- Demonstrable understanding of the potential scope for a retainer agreement
- Full budget breakdown

- Number of hours covered by retainer fee
- Details and credentials (skills/experience) of who would work on the account
- Evidence of work in a similar field(s)

The scoring criteria will be as follows:

Area of scoring	Further detail	Percentage of overall score
Competency	<p>It is our aim to employ an agency that is both competent and demonstrates a full-understanding of Oxfordshire's place as a key driver behind 'UK PLC'.</p> <p>We would particularly invite you to share past experience(s) with us that relate strongly to OxLEP's work.</p>	40% (0/40)
Creativity	Bringing Oxfordshire's 'world-class' assets to life and connecting with key national and international stakeholders – through dynamic and integrated campaigns – will form an important part of your pitch.	30% (0/30)
Personality	Working with an agency, matching our team's enthusiasm and positivity is key to ensuring a strong, long-lasting relationship.	15% (0/15)
Price	Demonstrating good value for money – benchmarked against similar agency support – will also be considered as part of your pitch.	15% (0/15)
		Total score: (out of 100)

For those agencies shortlisted through to the interview stage – it is likely they will present to a panel made up of the following representatives:

- OxLEP Chief Executive
- OxLEP Director of Strategy and Programmes and/or OxLEP Director of Business Development
- OxLEP Head of Corporate Services
- OxLEP Communications Manager

9. Working arrangements

The retainer will be managed by OxLEP's Communications Manager on a day-to-day basis – therefore, they will be your primary contact during the contract.

10. Bidding and further information:

Please send all tender submissions to: **info@oxfordshirelep.com** by **Friday 2 March at 5pm** – please note, late submissions will not be considered.

Please state '**OxLEP PR agency support response**' in your email correspondence.

Agencies are welcome to contact OxLEP for an informal discussion regarding the project prior to the submission deadline. Please contact Rob Panting – Communications Manager at OxLEP – via: 07748 333402 or email: robert.panting@oxfordshirelep.com.

Please visit the following website for reference and information on OxLEP:
www.oxfordshirelep.com.

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