

## Exemption Request for WiFi Project Consultancy

15<sup>th</sup> October 2014

### Summary

Procurement Exemption is required to engage the services of Regional Network Solutions (RNS) to assist with Phase 2 of the WiFi project, at a cost of £8,450, on the basis of limited market and exceptional circumstances.

### Justification

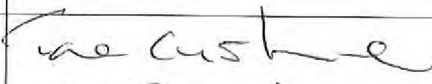

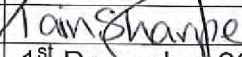
Watford Borough Council plans to go to market for a concession contract to implement a public access Wi-Fi network across the town centre and some specific community areas across the borough. This model has been used successfully by other local authorities and gives Watford the opportunity to implement WiFi on a cost neutral basis. This approach is based upon the local authority offering street furniture assets (lampposts, CCTV buildings etc) to the market, enabling a wireless infrastructure provider to use these to create a wireless network. However, the model is only possible if the location is deemed commercially viable by the market. A feasibility study was required to assess viability.

WBC is working on this project with partners across the town - West Herts College, Watford Community Housing Trust, Watford Town Centre Partnership, Safer Watford. Undertaking the project as a collaboration of local partners ensures both economic and social benefits are delivered and successful outcomes are achieved for multiple groups across the town. Jointly, these partners engaged Regional Network Solutions (RNS) to undertake a feasibility study. As all partners contributed towards the costs of the feasibility, WBC was not required to follow a full procurement process. RNS completed the scope of the feasibility fully, successfully and satisfactorily and the stakeholders were happy with the outcome. Watford is deemed viable for a concession based model.

The Feasibility Study was 'Phase 1', 'Phase 2' is the Enablement Phase, which involves detailed asset audit and producing an asset register, preparing the detailed concession contract and all supporting requirements and technical documentation, procurement, and technical and commercial evaluation. RNS propose a fee of £8,450 to assist with this phase. RNS has proved to have extensive and highly specialist knowledge of both the commercial and technical aspects of this market, and are fully abreast of fast moving trends and developments. These skills and knowledge are not held by WBC or any of the partner organisations. RNS engage only with public sector organisations, and their proven track record and experience suggest that they are specialists within a very limited market. Their involvement as a 'critical friend' to help guide us through Phase 2 of this project will help ensure the right outcome is achieved.

Funding contributions are being sought from the partner organisations, however, the recommendation is for a procurement exemption to enable RNS to be engaged to support Phase 2, on the basis of limited market – they are a highly specialist provider, and exceptional circumstances – they were engaged by the group of stakeholders to successfully deliver Phase 1, so have strong and established working knowledge of this project and what it is looking to achieve for all partners.

## Approved Exemption Record Form

	Details
Exemption category <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unforeseeable emergency</li> <li>• Exceptional Circumstances</li> <li>• Limited market</li> <li>• Prior approval</li> </ul>	Limited market and exceptional circumstances. Please see explanation overleaf
Details / Circumstances / Explanation of why an exemption was required:	Please see explanation overleaf
Approved by (Name and date): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MD – Manny Lewis</li> <li>• HoS – Jane Custance</li> </ul>	 
Portfolio Holder informed (Name and Date):	
Date reported to Cabinet:	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2014
Contract Title:	WiFi Project Phase 2
Vendor / Contractor:	Regional Network Solutions
Date Contract let:	October 2014
Term of Contract:	Fixed fee
End date:	On completion of WiFi concession procurement process
Total Value of Contract:	£8,450
WBC Contract Manager (Name and contact details):	Cherie Norris 01923 278029
Comments / Other Information:	None
Date entered onto Exemptions Register:	
Signed by Head of Service:	

Copies to:

Contract File  
 Head of Service  
 Corporate Procurement Manager  
 Central Register of Exemptions