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Tender

Online Community

YORKSHIRE WATER SERVICES LIMITED

F05: Contract notice – utilities

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-015232

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04595d

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Section I: Contracting entity

I.1) Name and addresses

YORKSHIRE WATER SERVICES LIMITED

Western House, Western Way, Buttershaw

BRADFORD

BD62SZ

Contact

Olivia Brown

Email

olivia.brown@yorkshirewater.co.uk

Telephone

+44 7977760175

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKE41 - Bradford

Companies House

02366682

Internet address(es)

Main address

www.yorkshirewater.com

I.3) Communication

Access to the procurement documents is restricted. Further information can be obtained at

<http://www.yorkshirewater.com>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted to the above-mentioned address

I.6) Main activity

Water

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Online Community

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 72000000 - IT services: consulting, software development, Internet and support

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

Yorkshire Water (YW) provide water and sewerage services to over 5 million people and 140,000 businesses in Yorkshire. We collect and treat over 1 billion litres of water every day. We operate over 670 water and treatment works and manage 100,000 kilometres of pipes.

Every 5 years, YW, alongside other water companies, submit a business plan to the industry regulator Ofwat, outlining the investment we plan to make in the next 5 years and the impact this will have on customer's bills. In the sector, this planning process is called a price review, we are currently amidst of price review 2024 or PR24. The most recent business plan was submitted on October 2nd, 2023.

The water industry faces increased scrutiny at the moment from customers and regulators due to negative press media regarding storm overflows. This means that expectations regarding business plans are higher than ever, and due to the cost-of-living crisis, bill increases are a huge concern to many people.

Therefore, the PR24 business plan required considerable customer research to be undertaken to ensure that our business plan was formed with customer needs at its heart. Several of these customer research projects were carried out on our online community 'Your Water'. Originally launched in 2017 to support the previous business planning process, our online community has since grown to become an integral part of our customer insight programme.

The online community has a sample of approximately 3,800 customers. Our members take part in a wide range of projects on a regular basis that are then used to inform key business decisions. For one PR24 project, we tested the acceptability and affordability of

our business plan with customers. This allowed us to determine how supportive customers were of our business plan, and how they felt about the projected bill impact. In addition to the PR24 projects, we have also carried out projects to inform the development of our communication campaigns and helped YW make important industry and policy decisions. The online community was also an indispensable source of customer insight during the covid pandemic, allowing us to continue engaging with customers during lockdowns, and understand the impact that the lockdowns were having on them.

The time has come to retender our online community. Going forward, we would like to develop the online community further, we would like to increase its potential, make it even more engaging for our customers and continue to ensure it will meet the needs of the business.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £915,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 73000000 - Research and development services and related consultancy services
- 79342000 - Marketing services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

There are many things the tendering agencies need to consider when developing their proposal:

- The online community has been used to carry out multiple types of research projects, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Typical methodologies include questionnaire-based surveys, focus groups, polls, photo competitions, in-depth interviews, vox pops, virtual discussion forums, and ethnographic studies. Our new platform needs to be able to deliver a similarly varied range of methodologies to provide the most appropriate solution for our projects.

- Tendering companies will need to:
 - o Work alongside the YW Insights team to design the research projects and ensure the needs of the business are met.
 - o Conduct recruitment for the online community on a regular basis to ensure there's a consistent sample of customers which aims to be as representative of our customer base as possible.
 - o Moderate the online community to ensure any queries or complaints by members are addressed and shared to YW in a timely manner.
 - o Provide output in the form specified by the Insights team. Reports need to be engaging and must provide feedback in the form of insight-led recommendations.

In addition to regular tasks, the community also does the following engagement work:

- Engages with customers through the 'Lounge', which is a discussion room where customers can post questions and start conversations with each other.
- Occasional 'engagement' tasks where customers can share pictures or details about themselves and receive rewards.
- We also have monthly newsletters outlining all the work that was done on the community that month
- 'Close the Loop' posts every 6 months where we provide updates on the projects that were conducted and the impact they had. We also take that chance to reward the most active members as a way of thanking them for their support.

Requirements

Objectives for the community include:

- To build and maintain an online community platform branded to Yorkshire Water (YW).
- To design and conduct high-quality research projects in conjunction with YW and provide robust insight for the business.
- To provide customer insight to support our business planning processes in addition to regular and ad hoc research requests from the business.
- To provide an engaging and fun place for customers to engage with YW and allow them to share their opinions about decisions that will affect them.

- To deliver reports in an engaging format to allow internal stakeholders to improve understanding of our customers and make decisions based on customer insight. Data tables and transcripts should also be provided where applicable.
- To ensure vulnerable and hard to reach customers are included in the community including markers for customers on our Priority Services Register and financial support services (e.g. WaterSupport).
- Continue to engage with customers in a wide variety of ways to ensure engagement and satisfaction with the community remains high and allows for a high response rate to our projects.
- Provide innovative solutions to address sampling issues to ensure sufficient representation of all groups. Note: young people have always been underrepresented on the online community. Proposals should therefore consider ways to improve representation of this group or provide alternative methods of engaging with this group on a consistent basis (e.g. external boosts for specific projects where representation is important).
- Ability to deliver to different timelines for surveys, discussion rooms, focus groups, polls, video diaries, and other task types - some of our work is very fast turnaround, the agency must have the capacity to meet the needs of fast turnaround pieces of work.

Note: Community sample must be broadly representative of the Yorkshire region, taking into account age, gender, location in the region (North, South, West, East), SEG group. However, we understand that responses will vary, so sample per project may be different to the desired proportions.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system

Duration in months

36

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

Optional renewal of 24 months

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: Yes

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

Option to extend the contract of an additional 24 months

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Negotiated procedure with prior call for competition

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate

Date

17 June 2024

IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted

English

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Yorkshire water Services Limited

Bradford

Country

United Kingdom