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OPCC Exemption to Procurement Rules Form

1. **Internal Details**

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| **The following details (1-5) are mandatory and must be fully completed. The information is required for audit and governance purposes** |
| Date: 27th May 2025 |
| Name: Charles Oakley  Position: Head of Governance, Finance & Transparency |
| What is being purchased? An integrated 24/7 communications support service that includes handling design of media output, website content, social media, marketing advice, and press releases for the Durham OPCC team |
| Who is the supplier? Better Times Ltd |
| Total Contract Value: £90,000  Term of Contract Required: 3 years ending 31st May 2028  If contract the number of Extension/s: N/A  Ongoing Estimated Maintenance Costs p/a: N/A |
| Is this a one-off purchase? No |

1. **Previous Scoping Background**

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| **Please explain briefly the previous process with regards to the initial establishing of the requirement (product / service) and who has been involved and why?** |
| The current arrangement was setup by the previous Chief Executive in December 2021 to cover the absence of a media function within the OPCC team. The Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) was approached for advice and recommended Better Times Ltd who provided a media service to several PCC Offices.  The new Chief of Staff reviewed the office media need and recognised the consistent output, flexible response to a wide variety of complex short notice business demands and experienced professional input that Better Times Ltd provided to help the PCC, and their Office negotiate a wide range of challenging circumstances. This resulted in an extension of the service to the end of March 2025.  The Chief of Staff has reviewed the service provided by Better Times Ltd and would like to appoint the service provider for the period ending one month after the end of the current PCC term of Office which is to 31st May 2028. |

**3) Reason for Exemption**

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| **Operational Emergency:** No    An Operational Emergency is a requirement which has arisen by an unplanned (out of the Blue) serious situation which requires immediate attention.  **Please provide details of what makes this an Operational Emergency.** |

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| **Proprietary Products / Service** Yes    A Proprietary Product is a product that has unique characteristics / advantages only produced by one provider.  **Please provide details of what makes this a Proprietary Product / Service**  The Chief of Staff and the team supporting the media function at the Durham PCC Office recognise that competent and effective media services exist withing the UK, who could provide an appropriate service for the Office. They recognise that a procurement exercise may also produce reduced cost and better value for the Office which could be delivered as a business relationship between the Office and a new service provider develops.  The current business relationship with Better Times Ltd has reached a level of maturity over the last three years where informed and positive conversations between the media professionals, the Office and the PCC have reached a level that enable rapid, effective responses to a range of planned and reactive business needs. That saves time, offers value for money and prevents mistakes that could damage trust in and the reputation of the elected PCC and their Office.  Better Times Ltd offer tailored support, deliver innovative and integrated media solutions for Durham OPCC and fully understand the complex environment in which the Office operates. Better Times is the only communications consultancy that specialises in supporting Police & Crime Commissioners. They have 29 years’ experience in policing governance and understand the (*small p*) political element associated with policing. The Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) would confirm that experience and have worked with Sally Blair on media and communications activities.  A web search has been completed looking for UK based companies that offer proven 24/7 communications support, including a full range of services to include: handling design of media output; websites; social media; marketing advice; and press releases. A number of organisations were identified offering that range of services supplied by Better Times, very few offering a comprehensive 24/7 service but none specialising in supporting Police & Crime Commissioner Offices. |

**4) What are the Implications to the following?**

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| **4.1** **Finance**  Please provide budget code: 4011  Please provide cost centre code: R200    **4.1.1 Is this a revenue or capital item?** Revenue |
| **4.1.2 If capital, has approval for capital expenditure been obtained?** N/A |
| **4.1.3 If Revenue have you sufficient funding in your budget?** Yes |
| **4.2 Risk:** |

**5) Terms & Conditions**

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| **Declaration of Interest**  Please confirm that there are no conflicts of interest in that respect relevant to this requirement. No  Please provide details in the space provided below of any persons who you know including relatives, friends associated with this purchase who are employed by the supplier, |
| **a) If a Proprietary Product / Service has the supplier signed our terms and conditions?** Yes |
| **b) If No, have you forwarded their T&C’s to Legal Team?** N/A |

**6) PCC Authorisation Levels and Signatures**

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| Exemptions from any of the following provisions of the OPCC Governance Thresholds may only be made by the following, where they are satisfied that the exemption is justified in special circumstances only:   * Up to £100,000 (Head of Governance and Finance) * £100,000 to £1,000,000 (Chief of Staff or PCC) * Over £1,000,000 (PCC) |

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| Authorised: Signature on behalf of PCC  image003  Name: Charles Oakley  Position: Head of Governance, Finance & Transparency  Date: 27th May 2025 |

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| Authorised: Signature of Chief of Staff    Name: Andrea Petty  Position: Chief Of Staff  Date: 27th May 2025 |

Signed on behalf of Better Times Ltd

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Name: Sallie Blair

Position: Director

Date: