

Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 11 October 2018

Subject: Channel 4

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Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	Paragraph 3

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the Combined Authority on this significant inward investment opportunity and seek approval of the Combined Authority's bid to attract the National HQ to Leeds City Region.

2. Information

Channel 4 Opportunity

Background

- 2.1 Earlier in 2018 Channel 4 launched its '4 All the UK' strategy which involves the establishment of a new National HQ and two new Creative Hubs in the nations and regions. Leeds City Region submitted a bid for the Channel 4 National HQ to be in our City Region. This represents a significant opportunity to expand the creative and digital industries, especially the TV, film and screen industries and would generate significant opportunities for talented individuals and independent production companies to flourish in the North.

- 2.2 The Combined Authority, district partners and regional industry bodies have collaborated closely to develop a compelling offer to Channel 4, engaging with many creative artists, screenwriters, education institutions, film/TV sector professionals and the wider digital community who have lent support to the partnership approach. To support the Leeds City Region bid the #4Sparks social media campaign was created. It has served as a tool for communicating the main themes of the Leeds City Region bid, receiving much support from a variety of stakeholders and is now a fundamental component of our bid.

Status

- 2.3 Following a strong collaborative bid and site visit, Leeds has been shortlisted by Channel 4 for the location of their new National HQ, alongside Birmingham and Manchester.
- 2.4 During August and September, Channel 4 has been holding advanced discussions with all of the shortlisted regions and has participated in visits to candidate cities to meet with members of the independent production sector, education providers and community groups from across the region.
- 2.5 Discussions are now at an advanced stage to clarify and confirm the details within the proposals made by Leeds City Region partners, these are set out in Appendix 1 (Exempt), and a final decision by Channel 4 is expected in the autumn.
- 2.6 These proposals have been appraised in line with the Combined Authority assurance process and recommendations on progression of proposals, conditions and future approvals for this scheme have been made by the Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team. Approval is sought from the Combined Authority as part of this report. Further information on the Combined Authority's assurance process is presented in Appendix 1 to Item 5 considered by this meeting.

3. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 3.1 Channel 4's connection with the Leeds City Region would provide enormous impetus and multiple opportunities for the Combined Authority to demonstrate its genuine commitment to local inclusive growth, diversity and social mobility.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 If successful, financial commitments to maximise the benefits of this opportunity are proposed from a number sources including the Combined Authority, as set out in Appendix 1 (Exempt).

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is a strict non-disclosure agreement in place which covers the terms of the discussions. If the bid is successful further legal support will be required to prepare the necessary documentation and assess the associated issues.

- 5.2 The information contained in Appendix 1 is exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of the appendices as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information as publication could prejudice current and future decision making.

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 Staffing implications are being considered and will be determined by the nature of the overall opportunity.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 No formal external consultations have been undertaken, however there has been extensive engagement of district partners and industry representatives throughout the bid process, as set out earlier in this report.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That the Combined Authority continues to support the Leeds City Region bid to attract the Channel 4 National HQ.
- 8.2 That, if successful, approval is given to the recommendations set out in exempt Appendix 1 including the proposal to proceed through the relevant stages of the Combined Authority's Assurance Process.
- 8.3 That approval is given to the forecast value of these proposals as set out in the exempt Appendix 1.
- 8.4 That future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in the exempt appendix including at decision point 5 (full business case plus) of the assurance process through a delegation to the Combined Authority's Managing Director following a recommendation by the Combined Authority's Programme Appraisal Team. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within the tolerances outlined in the exempt appendix.

9. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Exempt Summary of Leeds City Region proposal