

IFNC PILOTS SELECTION PANEL - NOTE OF MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2010

Present

Panel Members: Richard Hooper (Chair), Fru Hazlitt (Deputy Chair), Val Atkinson, Glyn Mathias and Marc Reeves.

Stewart Purvis (Ofcom Adviser to the Selection Panel)

Apologies from William Perrin.

Advisers and DCMS officials

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Richard Hooper (RH) welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Selection Panel. He said he saw the Panel's role as being apolitical, independent and advisory. RH said that once the panel had made its recommendations to Ministers on the three IFNC pilots, it would be for the Secretary of State to make the final decision and agree the public announcement.

Item 2 - Procedural issues for the Panel - conflicts of interest and hospitality

2. RH emphasised the rules around conflict of interest and cited the example of the sale of Stansted Airport, where an apparent conflict of interest had caused problems. RH invited the panel to examine the list of PQQ responses according to organisation and lead individual in order to check whether there were any conflicts of interest. He also asked Panel members if they were pension holders, shareholders and/or held shares in blind company trusts in any of the organisations involved.
3. All members of the Selection Panel confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest and in relation to offers of hospitality, they agreed that they should not accept them.

Item 3 - Evaluation Team Report on the bids received

4. RH invited DCMS officials to go through the PQQ process. They explained DCMS planned to issue the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD) document on Thursday (14th January); it was anticipated that the Panel would visit the pilot areas for the purposes of information gathering; and the formal tender document would be issued next month with the deadline for return set at 2 March.
5. DCMS officials provided feedback on the outcome of the Evaluation Team (ET) meeting. They asked the Panel to note the non-compliant bids and agree which bids should go forward to the ITPD stage.

Independently Funded News Consortium (IFNC) Pilots

- The Panel considered the ET recommendations. They were content that the evaluation process had been carried out in a fair, transparent and robust way. The Panel agreed with the recommendations on the non-compliant bids and on which bids to reject. They also agreed with the ET recommendations on which bids should proceed to the dialogue stage.

Table of the bids which the Panel agreed should go forward to the ITPD stage

| <i>Lead organisation</i> | <i>Recommendation</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Lot 1 – Tyne Tees | |
| ITN | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| UTV | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| Trinity Mirror | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| Lot 2 - Scotland | |
| STV | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| Johnston Press | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| Lot 3 - Wales | |
| UTV | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| ITN | Proceed to dialogue stage |
| Tinopolis | Proceed to dialogue stage |

Item 4 - Communications Strategy

- DCMS officials said the IFNC Pilots were likely to get a fair amount of media interest and there would need to be an announcement on which consortiums had been successful at an early stage.