

An Invitation to Tender to undertake a Social and Economic Impact Assessment of The Lowry and its programmes

4 May 2023

Context

Opened in 2000 as the Millennium project for the arts, The Lowry is a large arts organisation based in Salford, Greater Manchester. Home to galleries, theatres and learning spaces it welcomes over 830,000 people every year with a diverse programme of performance, visual and cross-art collaborations from all over the world. Its theatres alone stage over 1,000 performances of more than 350 different productions each year.

Named after the artist LS Lowry, the building is home to the world's largest public collection of his works and has a permanent exhibition on display year-round. The gallery also presents an exciting programme of work by contemporary artists throughout the year. Alongside a programme of work by acclaimed international artists and companies, The Lowry is also committed to commissioning new, exciting, relevant and contemporary productions. As part of The Lowry's Artist Development Programme, the organisation provides bespoke pathways to nurture artists and companies at different stages in their practice, encouraging them to present bold, dynamic and innovative work.

As a registered charity, at the heart of The Lowry is a commitment to using arts and culture to enrich people's lives. Through a diverse range of creative programmes and activities we maintain a sustainable and impact-led approach to working alongside local communities and young people in Salford and beyond. The Learning & Engagement strategy has a specific focus on working with vulnerable children and young people in Salford who face adverse life experiences. We hold a long-term commitment to key groups of young people including; Young Carers, Looked after children, Young parents and Young people experiencing homelessness. This work uses co-creative approaches to amplify the voices of children and young people through the art that they make, creating work that promotes social and political change. These projects have been shared and disseminated nationally, and we are regularly asked to share this practice with the wider sector and beyond.

The Lowry's business model is unique for its sector, generating over 94% of its overall income. It adopts an entrepreneurial approach to income generation, with its own ticketing business, a strong catering and conference and events offer and through fundraising. It is an Arts Council NPO. It also delivers a successful volunteer programme involving 300 passionate and committed volunteers. Volunteers predominantly fulfil the role of ushers to The Lowry's three theatres and are involved in wider Front of House functions, often being the 'face' of The Lowry when people first walk through our doors. In 2016, the Lowry Volunteer Scheme was a recipient of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in recognition of the valuable work the volunteer's undertake.

Brief

In 2013, The Lowry and its Trustees commissioned New Economy to undertake a study to demonstrate the economic and wider impacts of The Lowry and its programmes. Now in our 22nd year, we wish to revisit this study with a new and updated dynamic piece of work.

Our aim through this commission is to have a deep and thorough understanding of both the social and economic impact of The Lowry and its programmes as it stands today. We will use this piece of work to link to national and local policy, lobbying for investment in The Lowry and the sector as a whole, and we will use it to demonstrate the impact of our work when speaking to current challenges nationally such as cost of living crisis, mental health pandemic, workforce development and retention and economic growth. Funding and support for our sector is vital and our context continues to be challenging. We need robust and clear evidence to help us advocate for The Lowry and for Arts and Culture as a whole.

We will speak to a number of audiences with the report; from young people to community groups to politicians. Therefore the outputs from both the social and economic aspects of the impact assessment should be presented in a number of creative, accessible and dynamic formats. The agreed approach and associated outputs should be accessible to both audiences and stakeholders alike.

In consultation with The Lowry, the appointed candidate/s should ensure input from a range of voices across local communities, partners, and stakeholders to gather data and information. The agreed approach and outputs should speak to a local, regional and national context.

Both retrospective and prospective assessment should be considered.

Submitting your tender

Your tender must include the following information:

- Why you or your organisation is the right choice for this work. This should include credentials and evidence of your organisation's relevant experience in respect of the brief, and innovation in your approach.
- Details of team members to be assigned to the work and your proposed timeline
- Details of how you propose to fulfil the requirements of the brief with an outline of the intended methodology for both a social and economic impact assessment of The Lowry.
- Budget proposal, to include associated costs and relevant details.
- Examples of similar assessments you have undertaken evidencing both social and economic impact studies. Ideally these would show dynamic ways you have collected and presented similar findings.
- Two references which can be taken up immediately.
- We welcome applications from individuals and organisations with specialism in either economic or social impact assessment. In this instance, the work may be undertaken by more than one organisation, however The Lowry would seek to ensure that the overall commission is led by one organisation to ensure that the resultant outputs are cohesive and holistic.

Timeline

- 4 May- Invitation to tender issued
- 22 May- Tender documents to be returned to The Lowry
- 23 May- Shortlisted applicants to be advised
- 7 June - Interviews with shortlist at The Lowry
- 8 June - Successful applicant informed
- 5th October - Working draft and final submission dates to be agreed jointly

Other Information

Enquiries during the tender process should be addressed to Gwen Oakden (Development Director and Deputy to the CEO) and Jenny Riding (Director of Learning and Engagement) who are joint executive leads.

Contact details are as follows.

Gwen Oakden- Gwen.oakden@thelowry.com

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