

Tender for the Provision of Public Affairs Services Issued by: The Henry Royce Institute for Advanced Materials

Background

In January 2025, the Henry Royce Institute (Royce) launched the National Materials Innovation Strategy (NMIS) - a landmark initiative developed in collaboration with the UK's research and innovation community and supported by key government departments, including the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Department for Business and Trade, and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

This Strategy is the product of an extensive 18-month consultation process and sets out a 10-year vision to unlock the UK's full potential in materials innovation. At its core, NMIS addresses a critical national challenge: transforming the UK's acknowledged research strength in materials into commercial impact.

To support the implementation of NMIS and raise both its and the wider materials science innovation ecosystem's profile among policymakers and political audiences, Royce seeks to appoint a Public Affairs agency to lead a strategic campaign. The goal is to champion the role of materials science and innovation as an underpinning and enabling technology across the UK economy and advocate for the policy interventions necessary to realise the Strategy's ambitions.

The role and purpose of Royce will also be embedded within this Strategic Campaign. We are the UK's national centre for research and innovation for advanced materials. Royce was established to ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of materials research and exploitation through collaborations with industry and academia, and by providing access for the UK materials community to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.

Research undertaken at and in association with Royce tackles some of the most pressing challenges facing today's society, from providing energy for future cities to decarbonisation and new recyclable materials. We believe that collaboration between researchers associated with Royce and industry will create real solutions to global grand challenges and provide significant societal and economic benefit to the UK.

Royce brings together world-leading expertise and technical capabilities and works closely with industry to ensure translation and commercialisation of fundamental research. Royce operates as a hub and spoke model, with our hub at The University of Manchester, and spokes at eight founding Partners, the Universities of Sheffield, Leeds, Liverpool, Cambridge, Oxford and Imperial College London, UKAEA and UKNNL. Royce has two Associate Partners, Cranfield University and the University of Strathclyde.

Strategic Context

The materials sector, while often seen as a supporting function, is in fact a vital sub-sector underpinning key elements of the UK's Industrial Strategy. From aerospace and automotive to semiconductors, through to health and energy technologies, materials innovation is foundational to progress. However, we know that its contribution can be under-recognised.

Through this campaign, Royce aims to strongly position materials innovation as a strategic enabler, advocating for policies that reflect its cross-cutting importance in delivering economic growth, net-zero targets, improved public health and resilient infrastructure.

Campaign Overview

We propose a two-tiered campaign structure:

1. Flagship Campaign:

Theme: *Unlocking UK Economic Growth Through Materials Innovation*

This campaign will position NMIS as a central pillar of industrial progress, highlighting Royce's leadership role and advocating for implementation across government and industry. It will leverage NMIS as a live document, shaped by ongoing engagement through the Materials Innovation Leadership Group (also established by Royce).

NMIS Strategic Objectives:

- Accelerate Commercialisation: Reduce the time from research to market.
- Embrace the opportunities offered by the digital revolution.
- Enable Cross-Sector Collaboration: Connect government, academia, and industry.
- Advance Sustainability Goals: Enable net-zero and circular economy outcomes.
- Stimulate Economic Growth: Realise up to £4.4bn in GVA and double sector employment to 52,000 by 2035.

2. Thematic Sub-Campaigns:

Aligned to NMIS strategic themes, we will initially drive the following areas, all of which need more national focus and attention, and where the materials innovation aspects don't have another clear national "owner".

- Materials for Health (focus: bioelectronics)
- Materials for Hydrogen (focus: Royce Hydrogen Accelerator)
- Decarbonising the Foundation Industries
- Regional Materials Innovation (focus on a regional project as an exemplar)
- Materials 4.0 (digitalisation and automation in materials research and innovation)

These sub-campaigns will help articulate the role of materials innovation in addressing specific national priorities and build a compelling case for investment and policy support.

Why This Matters Now

Recent economic data from NMIS highlights the significance of the sector:

- 2,500+ UK companies active in materials innovation
- £45bn contribution to UK GVA; £1 trillion in global turnover

- 635,000 UK employees, predominantly in micro businesses
- 70% of these companies located outside London and the South East

This is a sector of national importance and untapped potential and our campaign must reflect that.

Objectives of this Engagement

We are seeking a public affairs agency that will:

- Develop a robust campaign and engagement strategy targeting political and policy audiences
- Design and deliver tactical activities that align with campaign goals and themes
- Enhance our intelligence on political and policy landscapes, helping us anticipate and respond to developments
- Facilitate meaningful engagement with Parliamentarians, government departments, regional leaders and public funders

Scope of Work

The agency will be expected to:

- Develop a 6-month Public Affairs Strategy focused on UK Government engagement
- Provide continuous political and policy monitoring, including:
 - UK Parliament (Commons and Lords)
 - Regional governments and Metro Mayors
 - Agencies and stakeholders such as UKRI, Innovate UK, Catapult Network, Hydrogen UK, BPF, Energy UK, ABHI, and others
 - Key social media/political discourse relevant to materials science
- **Deliver tactical engagement, including:**
 - Stakeholder mapping and development of tailored engagement plans
 - Crafting of key messages and policy narratives based on NMIS
 - Briefings, meetings, and introductions to relevant policymakers
 - Organisation of a **Parliamentary Reception** to formally introduce NMIS to Westminster
 - Support and development for event attendance (e.g., Party Conferences, fringe events, Royce Round Tables)
- Provide guidance during sensitive political periods (e.g. pre-election, fiscal events)
- Maintain strict confidentiality and political neutrality throughout

Deliverables

- A 6 month Public Affairs Strategy and Tactical Plan

- Stakeholder engagement map and priority targeting matrix
- Political intelligence updates to Royce
- Design and delivery of a Westminster-based launch/reception
- Custom briefing materials for policymakers and officials
- Recommendations for event participation and external engagement
- Evaluation framework for impact tracking

Selection Criteria

Agencies will be evaluated based on:

- Demonstrable experience in public affairs for innovation, science or industrial policy
- Proven track record in stakeholder engagement with government and Parliament
- Understanding of the UK political and policy landscape
- Capacity to deliver strategic and tactical support across a 12-month period
- Creative and flexible approach to political campaigning
- Commitment to neutrality and discretion

Management and Governance

The contract will be directly managed by the Royce Head of Communications Judith Holcroft, with further input and oversight from the Royce CEO Professor David Knowles and support from key spokespeople.

Timeline

We envisage the project will follow this timeline, with some flexibility where necessary.

- Invitation to Tender: 2 July 2025
- Closing date: 09:00 25 July 2025
- Appointment of Contractor: 1 August 2025
- We expect the contractor to lead in with and align to Royce's biennial National Flagship Conference which takes place 3-4 September and is focussed on the NMIS.

Budget and Duration

£40,000 is available for this project inclusive of VAT and expenses.

It is expected to be delivered within a 6 month time frame – a contract extension maybe considered.

How to submit a proposal

Submission by 09:00am on 25 July 2025

Proposals should be no more than 800 words and should include:

- Understanding of the brief

- A very short outline set of recommendations – with a focus on tactics used
- A statement of credentials in relation to the brief including key personnel and examples of previous work – for example:
 - Experience of working with a National STEM Body
 - Ability to develop campaigns that are compelling
 - Demonstrable experience in public affairs for innovation, science, or industrial policy
 - Proven track record in stakeholder engagement with Government and Parliament
 - Understanding of the UK political and policy landscape
 - Capacity to deliver strategic and tactical support across a 6 month period
 - Creative and flexible approach to political campaigns
 - Ability to work with team members to develop stories/narratives
- Costs including fees and expenses (inc. VAT)
- Previous customer feedback on similar work

Please submit proposals by email, with the subject line **Confidential – Tender to provide Public Affairs Services** to communications@royce.ac.uk

Proposal Evaluation

We will evaluate proposals using the following criteria:

- Understanding of the brief: 40%
- Previous experience and subject knowledge: 40%
- Value for Money: 20%