

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL - A SUPPLIERS GUIDE

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- Finance
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- Regeneration
- Adult Social Services
- Technical Services

1.0.0. INTRODUCTION

Wirral Borough Council spends approximately £180 million per annum on the provision of goods and services.

The Council is committed to providing a high quality service to meet both the current and future needs of local people. Effective procurement, based on value for money, supports the Council in achieving this vision and meeting its corporate objectives. As a result, suppliers have a key role to play and the Council encourages competition, welcoming bids from both new and existing suppliers.

The guide has been produced to assist suppliers by:

- Providing an awareness of the rules the Council must follow in inviting suppliers to bid for contracts
- Informing suppliers how to identify opportunities from the range of goods and services required by the Council
- Explaining how to tender for Council contracts
- Providing specific information relating to each Service Unit

2.0.0. PROCUREMENT POLICY

2.1.0. Contractual Arrangements

The Council arranges contracts covering the procurement of a wide range of goods, works and services.

The Procurement Policy of the Council is to provide a formal framework to be used by all of the Service Units engaged in procurement on behalf of the Authority. Its purpose is to ensure that all goods, works and services purchased are of optimum quality and quantity and obtained at the most competitive price to meet the needs for which they are required.

The policy ensures that the requirements of public and member accountability are met at all times and that the Council is seen to trade efficiently and fairly based on the principles of equal treatment, transparency and competitive procurement.

2.1.1. Goods and Services Contracts

Contracts for commonly required goods and services are undertaken centrally by Wirral Corporate Procurement. For procurement of all other specific goods and services it is the responsibility of each Service Unit.

Tendering procedures will vary in detail between the various Service Units, nonetheless all Service Units will generally adhere to a policy that will:

- Avoid over specifying a requirement.
- Write specifications as far as possible in terms of output not input.
- Invite a sufficient number of tenderer's to ensure a fair competition but remove barriers to participation by small suppliers without discriminating against larger suppliers.
- Provide clear documentation.
- Give all tenderers equal opportunity.

2.1.2. Works Contracts

The Council uses the **Constructionline** Register of qualified construction contractors and consultants as a method of procurement for works contracts.

Contractors wishing to be considered for building work within the Council should register with **Constructionline** at:

PO Box 6441
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG21 7FN
Tel: 0844 892 0313
Fax: 0844 892 0315
Email: constructionline@capita.co.uk

Or alternatively contact:

Mr Chris Evans: 0151 606 2342

2.2.0. Procurement Rules and Regulations

The Council is subject to regulations at a European, national and local level.

2.1.3. Security Issues - Construction And Demolition Contracts

Any security companies employed directly or indirectly on Construction and Demolition contracts must be accredited via the Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) operated by the Security Industry Authority (SIA). In addition, all security companies employed, must only use guards who are registered with the SIA, or any equivalent accreditation scheme within the European Community. This requirement will also apply to security contracts awarded directly by the Council.

All construction projects over £250,000, must also have a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP)

2.2.1. Standing Orders

The Council has “rules” contained in the “Procurement Standing Orders relating to Contracts” which regulates all procurement. The purpose of the Procurement Standing Orders is to ensure that competition and propriety is present in the tendering and award of contracts. The Procurement Standing Orders cover the thresholds, level of authority and procedures for enabling competition. They regulate the manner in which quotations and tenders are invited, evaluated and awarded.

The values detailed in the Procurement Standing Orders relating to contracts are as follows:

Works, Goods and Services Procedure

- £0 – below £10,000 – Verbal or written notes on copy order

- £10,000 – below £50,000 – At least 3 written, faxed or email quotations
- £50,000 – OJEU Thresholds – Expressions of interest and tender process or approved list of suppliers.
- Above OJEU Thresholds – OJEU procedures

Works Contracts

As above information via Constructionline up to OJEU thresholds. For contracts above the OJEU thresholds, the applicable procedures will be adhered to.

2.2.2. EU Procurement Procedure

All local authorities and public sector bodies are subject to European Union Procurement Directives (EU) Public Procurement Directives that govern how it may purchase goods, services and works over a specified value. These directives are included in UK law as a number of regulations.

Where the estimated contract value exceeds the threshold, a Tender Notice must be placed in the supplement to Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) to give all Suppliers in the EU an equal opportunity to tender.

There are different types of tendering procedures that can be adopted (i.e. Open, Restricted, Negotiated or Accelerated). Each procedure imposes minimum time-scales covering the tender activities to ensure that reasonable time to respond to adverts and prepare submissions is given to interest parties.

A notice of contract award must be placed in OJEU. Unsuccessful tenderers must be debriefed if requested

2.3.0. Collaborative Procurement

Wirral Borough Council is a member of the North West Efficiency and Improvement Partnership and the Merseyside Procurement Group.

The Council actively supports the collaborative work of these groups and the contracts that are available through where such arrangements are advantageous to the Authority.

Wirral Borough Council will invite tenders for a number of contracts administered on behalf of the membership detailed. A list of existing contract categories for all goods and services provided by North West Centre of Excellence and the Merseyside Procurement Group is available on the Council website at: www.wirral.gov.uk.

Suppliers may submit a tender for any single authority for any item(s); any group of authorities for any item(s); or all authorities for any item(s). It is not necessary to quote for the requirements of all authorities.

2.4.0. Office of Government Commerce

Wirral Borough Council is registered to access and use OGC contracts where such arrangements are advantageous to the authority.

3.0.0. HOW TO FIND OUT ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES

The Council displays all current tender invitations on the Council's website: <https://www.thechest.nwce.gov.uk> Details of the tenders are available on-line and if suppliers wish to request tenders after viewing the documents, then this will also be done on-line by using e-mail facility.

Suppliers who do not have access to the internet may still apply for tender documents in the conventional paper form and reply accordingly.

3.1.0. Newspapers / Journals

Potential suppliers are advised to regularly check local newspapers along with trade journals for advertisements placed by the Council for goods, works and services.

3.2.0. Wirral Borough Council's Database

The Council's contract register is available on The Vault via The Chest at: <https://www.thechest.nwce.gov.uk> Potential suppliers should regularly examine this database for forthcoming opportunities. Contact can then be made with the appropriate Service Unit to obtain details of the advertisement timing.

3.3.0. Government Opportunities

Business Information Publications Ltd publishes "Government Opportunities" weekly.

For further information contact:
Business Information Publications Ltd (BiP Ltd)
Freepost
Glasgow
G3 6BR
Tel: 0141 332 8247
Fax: 0141 331 2652
www.bipcorporate.com

3.4.0. Official Journal of the European Union

Contracts over the EU threshold are advertised in OJEU. They are published in electronic format and may be accessed via an electronic on-line service entitled "Tenders Electronic Daily". The website address is:

<http://simap.europa.eu/>

4.0.0. HOW TO TENDER FOR COUNCIL CONTRACTS

4.1.0. Tender Documents

When a supplier applies for a tender a set of tender documents will be issued and will consist of:

- Introduction to Wirral Borough Council.
- the Conditions of Contract and Tender of the Council
- the nature and the purpose of the contract (specification)
- criteria for selection by which tenderers will be selected
- the period of the contract
- the price schedule upon which the tenderer submits the priced bid
- details of tenderer and references
- technical questionnaire (if applicable)
- form of Tender
- form of Agreement
- covering letter to set out the correct address for returning the tender, the tender reference and the closing date and time for the receipt of tenders
- return label detailing a) title of the tender, b) the date and time of the return
- such other information as considered appropriate to ensure the Council
- Best Value initiatives.

E-Tendering

Wirral Borough Council will move towards a web-based operation which will incorporate a full e-tendering service. Presently tenders will be forwarded on electronically and imminently be available for download via Adobe Acrobat (PDF). However tender returns for the immediate future are to be via the postal service.

Tenders can be submitted at any time prior to the closing date for the receipt of tenders. Reference to the electronic facility will be included on all public advertisements (including OJEU notices) quoting how to access the link to the site.

4.2.0. Tender Evaluation

Returned tenders will be evaluated against pre-determined criteria. Evaluation will focus on examining how the tender proposals deliver the service (quality) and the cost of the service (price). The Council will award the contract on the basis of "Best Value". The definition of Best Value is "the purchase of all goods and services on the most advantageous terms and conditions having regards to value for money and including: price, quality, quantity, reliability, fitness for purpose, timeliness and reliability of the delivery, economy over time, reliable after sales service, financial standing environmental, considerations and total cost to the authority."

4.3.0. Contract Award

If you are successful in your tender submission you will be notified in writing and be requested to sign a "form of agreement" to signify acceptance of the contract award.

Wirral Borough Council's terms and conditions prevail; amended or other terms will be accepted only at the approval of the Borough Solicitor.

4.4.0. Debriefing

If you are un-successful you will be notified in writing. Feedback is available upon request.

4.5.0. Reasons for non acceptance or disqualification

There are sometimes obvious mistakes and errors that can lead to a tender being disqualified or not accepted. Most of these can be avoided if you avoid the following:

Reasons for Disqualification:-

- Identification mark on the tender envelope
- Tender documents received after the closing date for the receipt of tenders - you should return your tender documents no later than the time indicated on the closing date for the return of tender documents. If you should miss the deadline, your tender will not be considered.
- Tender documents sent to the wrong address - must be sent to the stated return address
- Tender document returned in the open post without the self addressed gummed label affixed.
- Form of tender not signed

Reasons for non acceptance:-

- Uncompetitive - failure to submit the most cost effective, best value offer
- Not quoting a price for the specified product (and the alternative submitted is not an equivalent)
- Not quoting a price for the specified fixed price period
- Not completing the tender document in full - incomplete tenders
- Not supplying samples of products when requested
- Not supplying samples of management information, reports or COSHH data sheets with the tender documents
- Unsatisfactory references (performance) or financial history

Within the limits of commercial confidentiality, the Officer of the Council responsible for the issue of the tender documents will indicate to unsuccessful tenderers the reasons why their bid failed. This should be viewed as constructive feedback and used to ensure that unsuccessful tenderers are aware of areas for improvement to enable them to compete better for future contract renewals.

4.6.0. Contract Performance

All accepted suppliers are monitored throughout the contract period against the pre-defined performance criteria stated in the tender documents. Contracts have to be performed in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation.

A list of existing contract categories for goods and services is available on the Council website at www.wirral.gov.uk or alternatively please contact the Corporate Procurement on 0151 666 3349. The Council is continuously striving to improve its performance and it expects its suppliers to do the same.

4.7.0. Wirral Operational Units

Wirral Borough Council use direct order contracts covering common goods and services on which orders will be placed. Ordering of goods and services is decentralised to the various Directorates who are directly responsible for their own activities

4.8.0. Procurement Message to Suppliers

The Council is always on the lookout for new suppliers who can assist the authority in providing an improved service to its customers. Whatever the size of your business, there should be an opportunity to supply the Council.

Wirral Borough Council will conduct its business and operations in accordance with the highest professional and ethical standards. Any information received during the course of business and in particular the quotations or tendering procedure will be treated as confidential and not disclosed under any circumstances to a third party.

The purpose of this guide is to help potential suppliers identify opportunities from the range of goods and services required by the Council. It explains how the Council undertakes its purchasing arrangements, the procedures that the Council has to follow in inviting suppliers to bid for contracts, how to obtain further information and how your company might wish to tender for further business.