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Council

**Soft Market testing**

Touchstones

Contract Period:

**Dec 23 – Jan 25**

1. **Background**

Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) are seeking a construction partner with the relevant experience and expertise for delivering the refurbishment of the Grade II listed Touchstones Gallery in the heart of Rochdale Town Centre, to create a multidisciplinary cultural hub. The proposed works will be procured through a single stage open tender route, based on RIBA Stage 4 design information. It is proposed that the project will be delivered utilising a JCT Standard Building Contract without Quantities.

Touchstones is Rochdale Borough’s main arts and heritage venue and is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, operated by YourTrust charitable trust. The Grade II building is located within the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area and was originally constructed in 1884 as a public library, with further developments in 1903, 1913 and a series of mainly internal works in 2002 when it became the facility we see today. The building is owned by Rochdale Borough Council, who with the RDA and YourTrust have secured significant Arts Council funding to support the project. This project forms a key part of Rochdale Borough Councils wide-ranging programme of town centre regeneration that includes the restoration of the Grade I Listed Town Hall, a large new public square, and a range of new residential, workspace, shopping and hotel developments.

Whilst Touchstones in various forms has been successful for many years, the ground floor spaces especially are looking tired and out of step with what is expected from a visitor experience. Crucially the spatial arrangement and fit out significantly limits the range of uses that can take place within the building including Touchstones ability to generate additional revenue to support their operations, so the facility is in desperate need of reimagining and remodelling. Despite the tired interior, the existing building fabric itself is in a very good state of repair, especially considering its age.

The project aims to reconfigure, rebrand, and reimagine Touchstones to create a flagship hub which will form the heart of the newly envisaged cultural district. It will house new flexible spaces for production, enterprise, innovation, education, events, collections, exhibitions & performances. The project is predominantly focussed on making internal changes to help the facility accommodate a wider range of uses, attract new users, improve accessibility, and allow the building to thrive as a home for the arts whilst ensuring its financial and environmental sustainability. In achieving this, the completed building will become the key driver for promoting culture across Rochdale and the wider borough.

1. **Key Aims**

We would like to take the opportunity to do some `soft market testing’ as outlined below, to gauge interest levels in the project, and test whether alternative procurement routes would provide greater appeal in the market.

**Project Timescales**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage of the project** | **Anticipated deadline** |
| Soft market testing | 05th June 2023 |
| Tender issue date | September 2023 |
| Result of Procurement Process | December 2023 |
| Contract Start Date | January 2024 |

1. **Soft Market Testing**

**THIS IS NOT A CALL FOR COMPETITION**

The Council is looking to award a contract commencing January 2024 with an approximate contract value of £4m - £4.5m. It is further envisaged that the initial contract would be for a period of approximately 12 months.

The Soft Market Testing is intended to allow interested organisations with relevant experience to outline their views and provide information with no commitment to themselves or the Council.

**Stage 1 -** Interested suppliers are required to complete the following company information form and a short questionnaire (at appendix 1). Suppliers who complete and return the questionnaire ***may*** be invited to meet with Council representatives to discuss its requirements.

The questionnaire should be returned via The Chest - <https://www.the-chest.org.uk/> by 19th June 2023.

If Suppliers have any questions about this soft market test, such questions should be submitted to the Council using the ‘Question and Answer’ facility within the opportunity advertised on The Chest. A copy of the question and a copy of the written reply may be circulated to all Suppliers, with anonymity of the Supplier preserved. Suppliers must not raise questions through any other channels, including emails direct to the Council or to STAR Procurement. No questions will be responded to, other than those raised through The Chest as described above

**We encourage your participation in this soft market testing exercise, but must emphasise that your involvement in this exercise will not carry any commercial advantage in any ensuing procurement process.**

**No information provided in response to this soft market testing exercise will be used in any evaluation of any subsequent response to a procurement exercise.**

1. **General Information**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **3.1** | Full name of your organisation: |  |
| Contact Details Name: |  |
| Job Title: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Telephone no: |  |
| Fax No: |  |
| Mobile No: |  |
| Email Address: |  |
| Web Address (if any): |  |

1. **Undertaking from the supplier**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name:\* |  |
| Signed: | Duly authorised on behalf of the Supplier  (Electronic signature required here) |
| Position: |  |
| Date: |  |

**Appendix 1 – Questionnaire**

**Please complete the following questionnaire fully, highlighting any information that you consider to be commercially sensitive\***

1. Would you be interested in bidding for this proposed Project?

If Yes, why?

If No, why not?

Response:

1. Please detail the relevant experience your organisation has in delivering this type of project?

Response:

1. Would utilising a Schedule of Works alter your desire to bid for this scheme?

Response:

1. Would you be comfortable bidding for this project on the basis that the design for the Mechanical & Electrical works would be limited to a Performance Specification only and the final design / installation would be Contractor Design led?

Response:

1. Based on an approximate contract value of £4m - £4.5m and the high level scope identified under section 1, how long (weeks) do you feel would be reasonable to complete and return your tender, assuming a full RIBA Stage 4 design pack and accompanying Schedule of Work?

Response: