

Selling Goods & Services to Cheshire East Council

January 2019

CONTENTS

1. Cheshire East Council – Background and Introduction
2. Selling Goods & Services to the Council
3. How do we Purchase?
4. What do we Purchase?
5. The Government Regulations
6. Where can I find out about Advertised Tenders?
7. What can I expect from the Procurement Process?
8. How will my tender be evaluated?
9. Payment to Suppliers
10. Who to Contact?
11. Additional Help and Training
12. Suggestions and Feedback

1.Cheshire East Council – Background and Introduction

Cheshire East Council came into existence on the 1st of April 2009. It was formed from the preceding authorities of Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, Macclesfield Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. The confirmation of the decision to create a unitary authority was announced in December 2007.

Cheshire's boundaries remain the same as those of the former Cheshire County Council. Cheshire East is surrounded by 9 neighboring authorities along with its newest neighbors' Cheshire West and Chester Council, who were formed in the same phase of Local Government Re-organisation as Cheshire East Council.

Towns in Cheshire East

Cheshire East is home to the following towns:

- Congleton
- Crewe
- Knutsford
- Macclesfield
- Middlewich
- Nantwich
- Sandbach
- Wilmslow

Cheshire East at a Glance

Below are some key facts about the area governed by Cheshire East:

- Cheshire East is the third largest unitary authority in the North West next to Manchester and Liverpool
- Cheshire East has an area of 1,116km²
- Cheshire East has an electorate of over 292,000
- Cheshire East has 82 Councillors' representing 52 wards
- Cheshire East has a net budget of £260 million
- Cheshire East has approximately 10,500 staff

2.Selling Your Services to Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council recognises that effective and efficient procurement has a key role to play in delivering the councils objectives and plans.

Cheshire East wants to put the people of Cheshire East first, provide value for money and be locally responsive. How we decide what type of goods, works and services we buy, how we buy them and how the suppliers perform all impacts upon our partners, local businesses, the local economy and the environment. We are committed to supporting economic regeneration through local buying wherever possible.

The Corporate Procurement Strategy can be found at the below link.http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/procurement/procurement_strategy.aspx

Within our Procurement strategy we are committed to the fair, equal and transparent treatment of all current and future providers.

This document is a guide for suppliers to sell to the Council and sets out how we work, what we buy and where to make contact.

3.How do we Purchase?

Tendering Process/Thresholds

Depending on the price of the purchase the council's procurement procedure varies:

Purchases below £10,000

3 emailed or telephone quotations are advisable but not mandatory, preferably from small local firm.

Purchases between £10,000 d £25,000

At least 3 written quotations which will be subject to a contract risk assessment undertaken by the Procurement Team for anything above £5k.

Purchases between £25,001 to EU Spend Threshold

The Council requires at least a minimum of 3 electronic quotations which will be conducted using an E-tendering Portal. The Council has developed a risk based sourcing approach in assessing each and every procurement. This is to ensure that the procurement is carried out proportionate to the level of risk/value/complexity and that processes can be streamline wherever possible.

Purchases above the EU Spend Threshold

Tenders will be advertised on the tender opportunities section of the E-tendering Portal as well as the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The Council will carry out a rigorous tendering process and will be in accordance with European Procurement Rules.

4.What do we purchase?

As a local authority we buy goods, works and services for all of Cheshire East Council. These procurements can be books for libraries, stationery for schools, office furniture, ICT equipment for all Council Offices, Taxis and buses for the transport of children and the public of Cheshire East, Cleaning of buildings, road cleansing and the collection of household waste as well as the provision of a school meals service to the purchase of care for the elderly and the building of new schools to list just a few!

Value for money procurement is achieved through the balancing of cost, quality and performance and as such is a fundamental aim in the award of contracts let. Contracts to provide goods, works and services are evaluated and awarded

using evaluation criteria which take into account cost, quality, financial and technical capacity issues that may be deemed relevant. These criteria will be clearly identified in the tender documentation issued.

If you perceive your company can provide quality services that are of relevance and interest please respond to adverts placed and/or contact us through the links detailed in this guide.

5.The Government Regulations

All contracts let by the government and Local Authorities are subject to financial thresholds set by the European Union (EU).

The rules set by the EU must be followed and are designed to promote non-discriminatory practice and be transparent to tenderers.

Where the anticipated value of a contract exceeds the EU thresholds, the contracts must be advertised within the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The EU thresholds are reviewed every two years.

These procedures are subject to strict time scales and procedures.

Cheshire East Council has rules governing procurement, known as the 'Finance and Contract Procedure Rules' and these govern all procurements within the Council.

For contracts above the EU threshold the EU regulations will always surmount the Council's Finance and Contract Procedure Rules where conflict arises.

6.Where can I find out about advertised tenders?

If the value of the procurement is above the EU threshold, it will be advertised in the ***Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)***.

Access to this document and OJEU is only available electronically and further information is available from

<http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>

And

Contract and Tender Management System

Cheshire East Borough Council uses an electronic Contract and Tender Management System, known as 'The Chest'.

This system makes the procurement process leaner, more efficient, more transparent and accessible to the market. The Contract and Tendering System is the electronic method of receiving bids for opportunities over, which are to be openly advertised over £25,001.

All potential suppliers to Cheshire East Council will need to register with 'The Chest', the section within the Contract and Tender Management System where the procurement activity will occur.

'The Chest' gives suppliers the visibility to see current opportunities available from Cheshire East Council, along with opportunities from other bodies. 'The Chest' is used by over 30 Local Authorities in the North West of England; by registering on the 'The Chest' you can have the potential to see current opportunities across the North West of England.

When registering you will be asked to specify the goods / services that you provide and the areas / Councils that you wish to provide to. If any Request for Quotes (RFQ's), prequalification questionnaires (PQQ's) or Invitation to Tenders (ITT's) are posted that match the criteria that you have entered when registering you will automatically receive an email notification advising you of the details and deadlines for the required service - you are not obliged to provide quotations or tender if you do not wish to. Full user guides for registering as well as contact details if you require any help are available on 'The Chest'.

Additional supplier information is available on 'The Chest' from the 'Suppliers Area' at the link given <https://www.thechest.nwce.gov.uk/>

Or alternatively, you can visit our procurement internet pages and access the 'Chest' through this site:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/procurement/doing_business/e-tendering.aspx

7. What can I expect from the Procurement Process?

Procurement documentation may differ, dependent upon the chosen approach, however, in many cases, when expressing an interest in an advertised quotation or tender, you will be required to go through an assessment process to verify the company's suitability, experience and technical and professional ability.

This selection process may look at some or all of the following areas dependent upon the type/value/risk/complexity of the contract:

- Organisation Profile - Basic information about your company.
- Insurance – The Council requires acceptance and evidence of the company being holding the following minimum insurance levels/policies:
 - i) Public Liability - £5 million (For Adult and Children's procurements this limit will be a minimum of £10 million).
 - ii) Employers Liability - £10 million
 - iii) Professional Indemnity (where applicable) - £1 million

Note: For certain contracts you may have to increase the amount of Public Liability Indemnity Insurance you have and you may also need to carry Fire/Contract Works Insurance

- Financial – Financial checks may be undertaken (where appropriate) using the Councils current financial assessors' n2check (www.n2check). Companies will be assessed according to the level of risk stipulated by n2check.
- Health and safety – Details of you H&S policy/arrangements
- Equality & Diversity - Local authorities are required to ensure that whilst carrying out their functions, suppliers take account of the need to eliminate racial discrimination and promote equality. Companies may be required to evidence compliance with the legal obligations concerning: Race, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age, Religion or Belief, Gender, Human Rights
- Corporate Social Responsibility - You may be asked questions regarding your company' sustainability commitment and policy regarding environmental and social responsibility matters.
- Disclosure Barring Service (Previously Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)) – Where there is the potential for any member of your staff to come into contact with vulnerable members of society e.g. vulnerable adults and children, they must be vetted and approval by the criminal records bureau to either a 'standard' or 'enhanced' level dependant upon the type and frequency of contact. For further advice and guidance, visit <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/contact-disclosure-and-barring-service>
- Technical & Professional Ability – You will be asked specific project related questions which may refer to you track record and past experience, evidencing your capabilities.
- Handling of Workforce Matters (TUPE transfers) – Where applicable, TUPE details may be provided within tender documentation.

ICT Security and Data Protection

The security of Data and ICT is of utmost importance to the Council in order to safeguard its residents, service users and supply chain.

For projects being procured including transfer of data between the council and supplier and other bodies and/or projects including an element of ICT e.g. use of a system/software, the council will require an ICT Questionnaire to be completed. Tenderers will be made aware if this is a requirement within the tender documentation.

Tenderers can ask clarification questions where they are unsure of any questions and the Councils ICT department will advise accordingly.

To help provide some context and information on this subject please visit the various links below:

<https://www.ukauthority.com/articles/ncsp-think-cyber-think-resilience-cyber-pathfinders-exercises/>

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/smallbusiness>

https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/content/files/protected_files/guidance_files/small_business_guide_actions.pdf

8.How will my quotation or tender (ITT) be evaluated?

Your quotation/tender will be evaluated against pre-determined award criteria/weightings and will focus on the demand of the client and how you propose to deliver the required specification.

Contract award to Successful suppliers (in the majority of cases) is based on which tender(s) in the opinion of the council, is the most economic advantageous tender(s) i.e. (MEAT) e.g. in terms of price, quality, functionality, service etc.

Details of all criteria, sub criteria and weightings will be provided within the documentation along with an evaluation methodology so it is as clear to bidders and they are able to focus responses accordingly.

Upon determination of the contract award, bidders will be communicated to via the E-tendering Portal whether they have been successful or not. We will always endeavor to explain why the bidder(s) was unsuccessful and will provide feedback wherever feasible, suggesting possible areas of improvement for future submissions.

9.Payment to Suppliers

All local authorities now have prompt payment targets. This means that we are committed to paying all invoices within 30 days of receipt, irrespective of invoice value or payee.

Automated payment direct into your bank account (e.g. payment by BACS - Banker Automated Clearing Services) is the Council's preferred method of payment as it is cost effective, efficient and secure.

The Council has a 'No PO, No Pay' (No Purchase Order, No Payment) policy. This means that without an official Council PO, payment of supplier invoices will be delayed. No goods or services should be requested without a purchase order (following the correct procurement route).

For more information on payments, please visit the following link
http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/procurement/doing_business.aspx

10.Who to Contact

Cheshire East Council has a number of offices and facilities around the area that it governs. The main headquarters are based at the following address:

Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1HZ Tel: 0300 123 55 00

The corporate Procurement unit is located at:
Westfields
Middlewich Road
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1HZ

11. Additional Help & Training

There is some general help and guidance available for businesses at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline>

There is also a Procurement Toolkit - Cheshire East Council commissioned some training for SME's early 2011 and a procurement tool kit has been developed to help companies to ascertain if they are tender ready and to provide some practical tips and guidance. To view this document please visit

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/business/procurement/procurement_toolkit.aspx.

12. Suggestions & Feedback

Should you have any questions about any part of the procurement process or have any suggestions/feedback on how we can improve our advice and guidance for the future, or indeed have any queries about procurement within Cheshire East Council. please send your details and information to:

[**Procurement@cheshireeast.gov.uk**](mailto:Procurement@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Tel: 01270 686440