**Soft Market Testing**

**Out of hours call handling service**

**Request for Indicative Pricing**

Information is requested as part of a soft marketing exercise to seek the market’s level of interest in providing an ‘Out of Hours’ call handling service for Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.

# Confidentiality

*All information included in* this Soft Market Testing questionnaire is confidential and only for the recipient’s knowledge. No information included in this document or in discussions connected to it may be disclosed to any other party without prior written authorisation.

Background Information and Requirements

The council has a requirement for a telephone answering service to handle emergency calls when the council offices are closed.

The aim is to have the service available by July 2019 and the Council are interested to understand if organisations would be interested in bidding for this service and if yes, in receiving your indicative cost to meet the following specification:

1. The out of hours call answering service should cover the following hours:
* 5.30pm Monday to 8.30am Tuesday
* 5.30pm Wednesday to 8.30am Thursday
* 5.30pm Tuesday to 8.30am Wednesday
* 5.30pm Thursday to 8.30am Friday
* 5pm Friday to 8.30am Monday
1. The council is closed on Bank Holidays and also has requirements it may choose to enforce on the last working day before Christmas whereby we may wish to not open or to close at 2pm rather than the usual working hours above.
2. Inbound call volumes average at 230 per month. The services typically accessed by council residents and stakeholders (such as police, fire service, councillors) are building control (dangerous buildings). Homelessness, dog warden, and noise complaints.
3. Callers to the council when we are closed are advised to only hold on the telephone line if they have an emergency. The council will provide the out of hours call handlers with the relevant responses and contact details depending on the query being presented, the responses range from directing the caller to the council website to calling an on call duty officer. E.g. if a customer wants to complain about an abandoned vehicle they will be asked to log this on the council website or call back when we are open, whereas if a caller is complaining about a noisy neighbour; the out of hours call handler will check to see if they are known to the council and if so call the Environmental Health officer who is on call.
4. The council requires monthly management information on number of calls received across a range of council services along with the service level attainment. It is also desirable to have a profile of when calls are received so the council can better understand peaks in demand. Call recordings can also be required when the council needs to investigate what has happened on an out of hours call.
5. We do not require the out of hours call handlers to present themselves as council employees. We are clear that the emergency service is not resourced by council officers. There is no requirement for an overflow service during standard working hours.

Please return responses to procurement@basingstoke.gov.uk by 17:30 on 1st of February 2019.

For the avoidance of doubt no information provided in response to this questionnaire will be used by the Council in assessing providers during a procurement process.