

**Procurement**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**LOCAL BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS – SOUTH BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AREA PROJECT**

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**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. Buckinghamshire Council (the Council) is requesting information about the provision of Local Bus Services in the South of the County to help us plan for future configuration of these services when the current contracts end in August 2023.
  2. Suppliers are invited to participate in this exercise by completing the attached questionnaire. This will help the Council understand the composition, capacity and views of the supply market.

1.3 The information obtained from this exercise may be used to inform the Council’s approach to any procurement process it undertakes for the delivery of these services.

1.4 **This document is for information purposes only** and suppliers **will not** be held to any indicative costings nor excluded from any future procurement exercise on the basis of any information they provide.

**2. SCOPE**

The scope for this request for information (RFI) is that Council wishes to understand if there are alternative ways in which the provision around a number of existing local bus contracts that are due for retender can be delivered. This may include:

* reorganising the resources currently allocated to those services,
* ways in which your commercial services may be adjusted to meet these requirements either in full or in part
* ways in which these tendered services may be divided or recombined
* ways in which your operating position may enable a more efficiency deployment of these resources

**2.2** The purpose of this information is to achieve maximum efficiency and deliver best value for the residents of Buckinghamshire. This may either take the form of being able to preserve services at a lower cost, as a result of being more efficient in our approach to scheduling our tendered services, may result in the Council being able to deliver a greater level of service within its existing costs, or present ways in which the Council can make savings in a way that prevents enforced cuts to services. The current timetables or service levels need not be exactly replicated, but the Council may consider that there is a minimum appropriate level of service that needs to be provided or a certain journeys that must arrive by certain times (such as getting to school on time).

**2.3** The information received may be used to prepare timetables and schedules as part of a forthcoming tendering exercise, in addition, as amends to, or instead of any plans the Council may already have had as pertains to these services. However, where the information provided by operators is commercially sensitive, this will not be divulged. As such, for the avoidance of doubt, operators are requested to indicate what, if any, of the information provided is in their opinion commercially sensitive.

**2.4** Below is a brief summary of the current service provision and how they are scheduled operationally:

**Current Service Provision**

* Contract SL/71/T23: Primarily service 71, 73 and 78 in the Chesham and Amersham area, Mondays to Saturdays, with some service peak hour 77 journeys as well. However, on a Saturday, this contract also covers the Saturday service on routes 77, 149, 177 and 194. The services can be operated using 2 vehicles, all day, covering both peak hours.
* Contract SL/77/1: Services 77, 149, 177, 190 and 194 on Mondays to Fridays only. The service can be operated using 1 vehicle. On school days there is a morning peak and afternoon school journey but there are no afternoon peak services on this contract.
* Contract SL/581/T: Services 577, 581, 582 and 583 running Mondays to Saturdays in Denham, Uxbridge and Iver. The service can be operated using 1 vehicle, all day including peak hours.
* Contract SL/83/3: Service 83 running Mondays to Saturdays between Hedgerley, Slough and George Green. The service can be operated using 1 vehicle, all day, including peak hours. The service ends at 1623 on Saturdays and 1733 on weekdays.
* Contract SL/PAR/0: Service 8 (Wycombe Park and Ride), running between High Wycombe, Coachway, Cressex and High Wycombe town centre (including the Hospital, Railway Station and Bus Station). This service can be operated using 2 vehicles, all day.
* Contract SL/28/9: Service 28, 28A, 28M, 38 and 306, running various routes in the High Wycombe area, including between Lane End and High Wycombe, and services around Deeds Grove and Totteridge Drive. This can be operated with one vehicle, all day, including peak hours services on both school and non-school day on Mondays to Fridays only.
* Contract SL/160/5: Services 155, 158 and 160, the Marlow local services including links to high Wycombe and Maidenhead. This can be operated with one vehicle, Mondays to Fridays, during off-peak hours only.
* Full timetables for all of these services can be found here on our website ([Bus timetables | Buckinghamshire Council](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/bus-passes-and-travel/bus-timetables/))

## 3. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

### 3.1 Invitation to participate

3.1.1 The Council is inviting you to participate in this exercise by completing the attached questionnaire.

3.1.2 On receipt of the completed questionnaires the Council may wish to contact organisations to clarify information or to discuss particular responses. This will be done by telephone.

### 3.2 Administration arrangements and timetable

3.2.1 Should you have any queries regarding these documents, or the information required please submit them electronically via the Portal.

3.2.2 The following timescales will apply to this exercise:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Issue documentation | 13th March 2023 |
| Suppliers complete questionnaire | 13th March – 31st March 2023 12pm |
| Follow-up telephone calls if consider ed necessary to clarify information | Week commencing 3rd April 2023 |

### 3.3 Return of questionnaire (electronic submission only)

3.3.1 The Council would welcome responses in electronic format via the Portal by midday on 31st March 2023.

## 4. CONDITIONS APPLYING TO THIS EXERCISE

## 4.1 NOTICE TO SUPPLIERS

* + 1. This RFI and any related documents referred to have been prepared by the Council for the pre-market test to gather information.
    2. Whilst prepared in good faith, the RFI documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Council’s activities and plans and are not intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Council.
    3. The RFI documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that a supplier may require.
    4. Nothing in the RFI documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promise or a representation as to the Council's ultimate decisions in relation to the RFI.
    5. The publication of the RFI documents in no way commits the Council to award any contract or to undertake any procurement exercise.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY

4.2.1 The Council may disclose information submitted by suppliers during this RFI to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this RFI

* + 1. Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 4.2.3 the contents of the RFI are being made available by the Council on the conditions that the supplier:
* Treats the RFI as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;
* Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information has been publicised in accordance with paragraph 9 Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA);
* Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a response (or deciding whether to respond); and
* Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this Request for Information within any section of the media.
  + 1. The supplier may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:
* This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the supplier to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to the Council on the Council’s request) to keep the information confidential.
* It obtains the Council’s prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information; or
* The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this RFI;
* The supplier is legally required to make such a disclosure; or
* The information has been published in accordance with paragraph 4.5 (Freedom of Information).

### FEEDBACK

* + 1. We are unable to give individual feedback to suppliers following the review of questionnaires.

### INFORMATION, COST AND EXPENSES

4.4.1 The supplier is responsible for obtaining all information necessary for completing the questionnaire and shall bear all costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in connection with its preparation and delivery. The Council will not reimburse any costs.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 (FOIA)

* + 1. In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the FOIA and the EIR (Environmental Information Regulations 2004) and in accordance with any Government Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities’ functions under the FOIA all information submitted to the Council may be disclosed under a request for information made pursuant to the FOIA and the EIR.
    2. Suppliers should note that the information disclosed pursuant to a FOI or EIR request may include, but is not limited to, the disclosure of its RFI response (including any attachments or embedded documents).
    3. If the supplier considers any part of its response or any other information it submits to be confidential or commercially sensitive, the supplier should:
* Clearly identify such information as confidential or commercially sensitive;
* Explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information taking into account and specifically addressing the public interest test as set out in the FOIA; and
* Provide an estimate of the period of time during which it believes that such information will remain confidential or commercially sensitive.
  + 1. If the supplier identifies that part of its response or other information it submits is confidential or commercially sensitive, the Council in its sole discretion will consider whether or not to withhold such information from publication. Suppliers should note that, even where information is identified as confidential or commercially sensitive, the Council may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FOIA or the EIR.
    2. The Council is required to form an independent judgement of whether the supplier information referred to in paragraph 4.5.3 is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. The Council cannot guarantee that any information indicated as being confidential or commercially sensitive by the supplier will be withheld from publication.
    3. If the supplier receives a request for information under the FOIA or the EIR during and in relation to this RFI, it should be immediately referred to the Council.