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**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**FOR**

**PROVISION OF A CLOUD SERVICE PARTNER (CSP)**

**UNDER FRAMEWORK RM6100 TECHNOLOGY SERVICes (Lot 2 - Transition and Transformation)**

**TENDER REFERENCE: DN580401**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**UNDER THE** **CCS RM6100 FRAMEWORK - TECHNOLOGY SERVICES 3**

**REFERENCE NO:** DN580401

**LOTS COVERED:** lot 2 (Transition and Transformation)

**CUSTOMER:**  Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (“ the Authority”)

**START DATE:**  Tuesday 30th November 2021

**DATE RESPONSE REQUIRED:** **Tuesday 14th December 2021 @ 15.00 hours**

Dear Supplier,

We would like to notify you of an upcoming requirement, and by doing so we are keen to understand where the market stands in terms of our requirement below.

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks information relating to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SBC) would like to appoint a Cloud Service Partner (CSP) to execute an infrastructure transformation. The CSP will provide the technical expertise and services required to augment and support the ICT department in a cloud migration programme, transforming the estate to support the Authorities 2050 and business service ambitions.

SBC will be inviting a CSP partner to build on an existing Azure environment, commenced Q1 2021 and having now completed a first series of “lift and shift” migrations, approximately 100 workloads, IaaS and SQL Azure databases. The directive is to plan, manage and migrate the existing approximate 300 on-prem workloads and services.

Please note the following general conditions:

* This RFI will help us to refine the requirements.
* We reserve the right not to proceed with a direct award. Nothing shall constitute a commitment to ordering unless we undertake a direct award that results in the award of a Call-Off Contract.
* Should a Call-Off Agreement be awarded following a evaluation of Service Offers, the Potential Provider agrees to supply the services in accordance with the Call-Off Terms contained within the Service Offer and **CCS RM6100 Framework - Technology Services 3 (Lot 2 Transition and Transformation)**.
* Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to a RFI must be borne by the Supplier. We will not contribute in any way to meeting production costs of any response.
* Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from us.
* No down-selection of Potential Providers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this RFI **unless any Potential Provider states that they do not wish to be included in any further competition stages**.
* We expect that all responses to this RFI will be provided by Potential Providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
* No information provided by a Potential Provider in response to this RFI will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the Potential Provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.

# CURRENT SITUATION

SBC is focused on improving outcomes and services for residents, Technology is an essential element of the transformation. Southend-on Sea Borough Council is a Unitary Local Authority located in Southend-On-Sea in Essex. As the largest town in Essex (183,000 inhabitants), Southend lies 40 miles east of central London with direct rail and road links to the capital. Good transport links helped Southend to historically establish itself as a popular visitor destination, attracting approximately 6 million tourists over the summer months. The town lies within the Thames Gateway and in this context plays an important role in employment growth and new economic opportunities.

SBC Technology has restructured its department investing in resources and increased in-house capabilities and skills to support the council’s strategic aspirations - Southend 2050 and Transforming Together (organisational wide objectives are underpinned by technology which will be a key enabler to delivery). Covid-19 has brought significant change (remote working) and accelerated demands for technology.

# OUR AIMS – WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

The Buyer is looking for one or more Suppliers to deliver the following aims:

SBC is looking to partner with a CSP who can deliver the required discovery and migration of its services to the cloud. The partner will be a Microsoft Azure Migration Partner (AMP) and Cisco Gold partner who can provide project management and technical resources to facilitate the accelerated move from the legacy technical estate. The agreement will be between SBC and CSP only, the agreement is for a single supplier and SBC will not enter into any agreement where the CSP has enlisted services from any separate third parties.

Transition legacy solutions from an ‘On-Premises’ environment to a Microsoft Azure based cloud solution

As a Microsoft Gold Partner, the CSP will enable SBC Technology to gain access to available Microsoft funding to accelerate SBC’s journey to cloud. This will require specific AMP accreditation.

The CSP will provide the full complement of skills and resources, at the appropriate technical and management level, to complete all stages of the migration journey.

SBC will provide their own technical team to oversee the transformation, including a technical delivery manager (TDM) and Steerco where all works will be reviewed against the criteria, using Steerco performance metric. All final approvals, subsequent change requests, business approvals will be managed by TDM, approved by Steerco.

# WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The aim of this Request for Information is to inform and engage with Potential Providers to gain realistic and practical information relating to the ability of the market for the Provision of a Cloud Service Partner (CSP). This exercise is to inform of a forthcoming further competition opportunity for the Provision of a CSP.

# ATTACHMENTS

Further details about the personnel requirements also required are outlined in the attached Appendix B Draft Specification.

# RESPONSE REQUIRED

Potential Providers are therefore invited to complete the online questionnaire available on the Authority’s etendering portal: <https://procurement.southend.gov.uk/> and submit their completed questionnaire **no later than the deadline: 15:00 Tuesday 14 December 2021**.

The intention of the Authority is to undertake a further competition via the CCS RM6100 Framework (Technology Services 3) in December 2021 to procure a Cloud Service Partner (CSP) to execute a Cloud transformation.

Participation in the Request for Information Process does not guarantee a future contract. The Authority will conduct a further competition process via the CCS RM6100 Technology Services 3 Framework (Lot 2 – Transition and Transformation). Conversely a non-response to this questionnaire will not exclude any Provider from any future tender process **unless the Provider has indicated in their response to the questionnaire that they do not want to be included in any further competition stages**.

# OUR TIMETABLE

The timetable below is indicative only and the Authority reserves the right in absolute discretion to amend any of the dates set out in the timetable below or elsewhere in this document.

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| **DATE** | **ACTIVITY** |
| Tuesday 30th November 2021 | Publication of the Request for Information |
| Tuesday 30th November 2021 | Clarification period starts |
| Tuesday 7th December 2021 at 14.00 hours | Clarification period closes |
| Wednesday 8th December 2021 | Deadline for the publication of responses to RFI Clarification questions |
| Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 15.00 hours | Deadline for submission of a RFI Response |
| Wednesday 15th December 2021 | Analysis of RFI responses |
| Friday 17th December 2021 | Invitation to Further Competition |

# QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

* Potential Providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this RFI document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted via **the Authority’s Electronic Tender Facility’s message system https://procurement.southend.gov.uk**/.
* To ensure that all Potential Providers have equal access to information regarding this Procurement, responses to questions raised by Potential Providers will be published in a questions and answers document, which will be available **in writing via the Electronic Tender Facility’s message system to all Potential Providers on an anonymous basis, as and when any questions arise. Questions by means other than the Electronic Tender Facility’s message**

**system will not be accepted.**

* Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
* If a Potential Provider wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being published in this way, then the Potential Provider must notify us and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If we do not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Provider will be invited to decide whether:
	+ the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
	+ It wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

# LEGAL NOTICES AND DISCLAIMER

All information included within this Request for Information has been prepared by the Authority for the purposes of providing details to companies interested in participating in the forthcoming further competition for the Provision of a Cloud Service Partner (CSP).

By receiving the information, the recipient agrees to keep confidential the information contained in the documents or made available in connection with any further enquiries. The document may be made available to the recipients’ employees and professional advisors directly involved in the appraisal of such information. The Request for Information Pack shall not, either in whole or part, be copied, reproduced, distributed or otherwise made available to any other party in any circumstances without the prior written consent of the Authority, nor may it be used for any other purpose than that for which it is intended.

The publication of the Prior Information Notice in no way commits the Authority to award any contract pursuant to any further competition process.

# FOIA/EIR Compliance

In accordance with the obligations placed upon public authorities by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”)/Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIR”), all information submitted to the Authority may be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request made pursuant to the FOIA/EIR.

Recipients must carefully consider the use of phrases such as “in confidence” or “commercially sensitive” when submitting information since this will not necessarily protect such information from disclosure. In respect of any information submitted by Recipients which they consider to be commercially sensitive,

Recipients should do the following:

* Clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive and the consequences of disclosure; and
* Detail the envisaged timeframe during which such information will remain commercially sensitive.

The Authority is required to comply with the provisions of the FOIA and/or EIR and will normally seek comments from any party whose information subject to a request under the FOIA and/or EIR. The Authority may not agree with the comments of any party and is bound by the provisions of the FOIA and/or EIR. Even where information is identified as confidential and/or commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FOIA and/or EIR if a request is received. Receipt of information marked in whole or in part as “confidential” and/or “commercially sensitive” shall not be taken to mean that the Authority accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of such marking.

# GENERAL CONTACT POINT FOR THIS RFI

The Authority’s Corporate Procurement Team Manager can be contacted by sending messages via **the Authority’s Electronic Tender Facility’s message system https://procurement.southend.gov.uk**/. All messages received via the system will be responded to accordingly and communications by other means will not be accepted.