# Draft soft market testing prospectus for the joint out of hours call handling service v4 23rd February 2023

## Introduction

This soft market testing exercise concerns the renewal of the innovative joint contract for the provision for out of hours telephony service.

The provision of a high quality out of hours call handling shared service is imperative for the current users of the joint service and equally important for any potential new joiners.

The current framework is hosted by the London Borough of Ealing and is used by Ealing, Barnet, Haringey, Barking and Dagenham, and Enfield.

As the Councils come to the end of a successful period of 7 years of working together (in the last of a series of contracts) they are looking to renew the arrangement and to offer the opportunity for other public bodies to join it.

In order to maximise the efficiency of the arrangement the new supplier may be required to undertake integration of the call centre service with the back-office function of each individual council.

All Councils and Housing Arm’s Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) nationally offer an out of hour’s service, some retain the service in-house whilst others have sub-let or work in partnerships with other organisations to provide a service. The current Ealing- led Out of Hours Service is exceptional in that all transactions are auditable and fully computerised in the overall management of both telephone and data systems. Some organisations may require an optional day time call handling service, however at present none of the participants have expressed a wish to utilise this option.

The Participating Organisations have joint ownership of a state of the art of telephony system which will be made available to the appointed supplier without charge. This is illustrated below: -

A picture containing chart

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Figure 1

## **Procurement route**

The Councils would like to hear suppliers’ views on how the procurement could be scoped to incorporate both the call centre and back-office integration aspects.

A time and resource efficient competitive dialogue is planned with a live dialogue phase of 8 weeks [maximum], before firms withdraw to prepare their detailed tenders. There will no interim de- selections reducing bidders’ costs in competing for the work.

It is intended to give firms full certainty on issues of risk partition and technical standards through astute drafting and a full and open discussion during the dialogue.

The indicative timeline for the procurement is shown below: -



Figure 2

## **Soft market testing**

The participating organisations would like to hear the views of potential suppliers on the topics above including how to scope the procurement to include the call centre and back-office elements.

A common agenda will include the following elements:-

* Affordability
* Technical Innovation
* Procurement route
* Contract structure
  + Risk partition
* Performance monitoring and enhancement
* Optimal contract term
* Expansion of client base
* Technology renewal with time
* Mobilisation and service set up
  + How much time do you need to mobilise?
* Social Value provisions
  + Suppliers’ views on meeting the requirements of the Participating Organisations

If would like to talk to the Councils at individual soft market testing meetings, all with a common agenda and the same time allowance, please write in no more than 2,000 words why you would like to talk to us. The soft market testing days are planned for the 6th and 7th March 2023.

Meetings will take place at Perceval House, [14-16 Uxbridge Road, London W5 2HL](https://www.bing.com/local?lid=YN1029x10617156277606970236&id=YN1029x10617156277606970236&q=Perceval+House&name=Perceval+House&cp=51.51320266723633%7e-0.30884701013565063&ppois=51.51320266723633_-0.30884701013565063_Perceval+House).

Please send your submission in via the PIN opportunity on the London Tenders Portal.

## **Project Management**

The procurement is being run on a scaled PRINCE 2 basis and the Councils have engaged a dedicated Programme Manager to ensure the programme remains deliverable. There is a Board in place to exercise robust governance and to ensure that communication channels between Councils are robust.

## **Communication between participants and the lead authority**

The London Borough of Ealing is leading on the procurement activity within the programme and will act as the single point of contact for formal communications as regards to the soft market testing exercise and subsequent activities

## **Feedback to potential participants**

The Councils will produce an anonymised generic summary of what themes emerged during soft market testing and share this will all potential suppliers who expressed an interest in taking part. This will not include any aspects flagged as commercially confidential by participants (but please see the note on Freedom of Information below). Once the formal procurement process begins, the Councils will keep participants informed at appropriate stages of the procurement.

The Councils cannot see everyone, but please be reassured that if you are not selected, you will be in no way disadvantaged when the definitive Find a Tender Service notice is published.

## **Freedom of Information**

The Participating Organisations are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and may be obliged, when requested, to disclose information you provide to them even though it may be regarded as confidential. However, the exemption from disclosure applying to information which, if disclosed, would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person including the Council (including such information relating to a procurement exercise) will apply, provided that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **Queries**

Where we receive queries in relation to this prospectus and we believe the response will be of general interest we will circulate the query and response to all the parties that have expressed an interest.