# St Helens Borough Council

## Christmas Lights & Trees (St Helens & Earlestown) Project - Soft Market Test

**Introduction**

Please read the document and if you feel that your organisation is able to contribute to this Soft Market Testing exercise, please complete the questionnaire attached to the end of this document and return via the messaging facility on The Chest by **5pm on Wednesday 13th July 2022.**

In order for potential providers to gain an understanding of the requirement and the area in which we are looking to decorate we are holding a virtual information event on **Tuesday 5th July 2022 (2.00pm for 2 hours)**. The event will be an opportunity to gain a full understanding of our requirements, ask any technical questions to be in a position to tender and if required register on to the e-portal system. If you wish to attend, please confirm by via the messaging facility on The Chest **by Monday 4th July 2022 at 16.00.**

The following are pertinent to this soft market testing:

• An understanding of what St Helens Borough Council are aiming to deliver;

• An ability to innovate and add value;

• Whether the market has experience of being involved in and delivering similar projects; and

• The overall value added in helping to scope the project.

**Please note that this is not a call for competition or indeed any form of tender. For the avoidance of doubt, this notice is for the purpose of conducting a soft market testing exercise and will not formally begin the procurement or constitute any commitment by St Helens Borough Council to undertake any procurement exercise.**

**Soft Market Testing (SMT)**

SMT in this case is where St Helens Borough Council, at an early stage in development of its proposals but prior to formulating any formal procurement opportunity, seeks input from the market as to what might be the most potentially attractive way of packaging and scoping a future procurement opportunity.

This exercise will also provide an opportunity for St Helens Borough Council to obtain insight into how potential providers might approach the delivery of the service in question. It also gives useful early insight into the likely level of interest in a proposed project from that market.

Potential participants will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to the soft market testing or attend the face-to-face interviews.

Potential participants must also note that a response to this request does not guarantee an invitation to participate in this or any future procurement that St Helens Borough Council may conduct, nor that

St Helens Borough Council will procure any such supply and services or accepts any proposals offered. Any procurement of the supply and services by St Helens Borough Council will be carried out strictly in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the “Procurement Regulations”).

St Helens Borough Council have developed a questionnaire (at the end of this document) that they would like interested parties to complete, interested parties may then be invited to meet with the project team to discuss in more detail the options. As stated above the outcome of the SMT exercise will inform an options appraisal with recommendations. Further detailed reports will be prepared as appropriate in accordance with the Council’s tender and approval procedures, and in accordance with the Procurement Regulations.

**Project overview**

St Helens Borough Council is looking to appoint a contractor(s) to supply and install Christmas lights & trees in both St Helens and Earlestown town centres.

To decide what model to adopt for this year’s (and future years) Christmas lights and trees the Council wishes to conduct a soft market test which will give this both a capital and revenue perspective in the following areas of work:

* Purchase or lease of Christmas lights (as per attached current specification – St Helens & Earlestown as a minimum) we would welcome feedback and innovation to be provided by suppliers to design a new and refreshed approach for future years.
* Purchase or lease of Christmas Trees (looking at options of real trees and bespoke structures) – 2 x large trees for St Helens (Victoria Square & Church Square) and 1 x large tree for Earlestown (Market Street/ Market Square)
* Installation and removal of Christmas lights & trees (must be accredited by the Highway Electrical Registration Scheme)
* Storage, maintenance and testing of Christmas lights, trees and bespoke installations (collection January 2023)
* Service provision from October/November 2022 for Christmas 2022 (proposed dates for both switch on events are: Earlestown – Friday 25th November 2022 & St Helens – Saturday 26th November 2022) on a 3-5 year period.

We would welcome feedback from the providers on potential costs for a ‘bronze’, ‘silver’ and ‘gold’ option for future years. Costs must include for installation, removal, storage and maintenance of the Christmas lights & trees. The Council would also need to understand running costs and how we can maximise efficiency in the future to complement the Council’s commitment to the Climate Change Emergency.

St Helens is proud to be nominated as the Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture for 2023. We are planning an exciting programme of events one component being a lighting extravaganza and illuminations on key sites throughout the borough and dates throughout the year. We would welcome as part of this market testing exercise to explore opportunities with those who could provide these services to maximise the attraction of visitors through a combination of our Christmas and Borough of Culture celebrations. <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/culture/>

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## Questionnaire

St Helens Borough Council would like you to consider the questions below and submit a written response via the Chest procurement portal by **5pm on Wednesday 13th July 2022**. Your responses should be brief and to the point. There is no maximum word count imposed, but please do not use generic brochures or marketing material as an answer to any question.

**Set questions:**

1. Please provide a short overview of recent similar, innovative Christmas lighting & infrastructure projects.
2. Would you have available capability/capacity to mobilise an experienced and dedicated team October/November 2022?
3. The overall project term could last for up to five (5) years with multiple phasing of the works over the whole term. How would you ensure commitment, quality and resource availability over that period?
4. How would you ensure that we can include some recognisable innovation is included in the delivery of this significant Christmas lights & structures project?
5. Please advise what options you would like to see being used under this contract.
6. As we need to publish our award criteria when we publish the Contract Notice or indeed when we release our tender documents suppliers are requested to make one or two proposals regarding the values associated to the key award criteria, technical/price and what would be your rationale for this approach? Note: we are unable to discuss award criteria once we are in the tender process itself.

**All responses to the questionnaire will be treated as confidential and all will help us to shape our specification and the project generally in the knowledge that what we are including in it has the backing and support from the market.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Full name, address and website:

Organisation name

Type of Organisation/Company

Address

Town/city

Postcode

Country

Website

Main contact for correspondence about this questionnaire:

Name

Position

Telephone number

Mobile phone number

Email address