

How to do business with Worcestershire County Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	
What the Council Buys	
How the Council Buys	
The Approved List	
How to apply for the Approved List	
Information Requested on the Application Form For Approved Lists and Select List Tenders	
Tendering for Contracts	
Tendering Tips	
Contract Monitoring	
Local Business Partnership	
Useful Contacts	

Worcestershire County Council

INTRODUCTION

The Council spends approximately £200 million per annum on a varied range of works, services and goods. It is the Council's duty to aim to secure best value for money in procuring its works, services and supplies and to continually improve quality.

However, we have also recognised the role that Procurement has to play in achieving our social economic and environmental aims, which are set out in our Community Strategy. We are committed to non-discrimination in our procurement, with fair and transparent procedures and equal treatment of all potential suppliers. These guidelines have been produced to ensure that potential suppliers fully understand the procedures involved.

We want to help increase the capacity of local Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) firms, helping them become 'Fit to Compete' and secure contracts from main service providers. It is hoped that this will generate increased workloads which will in turn help local employment and create other community benefits.

There are also several environmental targets in Worcestershire's Community Strategy that will contribute towards achieving an environmental friendly County. We want to work with our contractors and suppliers to encourage them to identify and minimise the environmental impacts of their activities including the production of waste, consumption of energy and the use of environmentally damaging materials. This can be achieved through awareness raising and encouraging the development of an environmental policy and environmental management system.

There is, of course, a great deal of competition for Worcestershire County Council contracts. In order to win the Council's business, potential suppliers will need to be competitive in price and to provide high quality goods and services. We hope that this guide will provide a useful source of information to help maximise your prospects of securing our business.

WHAT THE COUNCIL BUYS

The Council buys many different services and supplies. Here are just some of the areas covered:

Services

Advertising Services
Agency Staff Services
Building Cleaning
Catering Services
Confidential Waste
Consultancy Services
Courier Services
Furniture Collection/Storage Redelivery
Grounds Maintenance Services
Insurance Services
Deep Cleaning Services
Legal Services
Mechanical and Electrical Maintenance Services
Microfilm Processing Services
Personnel Services
Professional Services relating to
Construction Contracting
Repair and Maintenance of Street Lighting
Reprographic Services
Security Services
Social Services: Homecare
Contracts/Residential Care Contracts
Telecommunication Services
Temporary Staff Services
Transport
Waste Disposal

Utilities

Electricity
Gas
Water

Goods

Books
Bottled and Fixed Point Water
Catering Supplies (Food)
Cleaning Materials
Computer Equipment and Consumables
Electric Lamps/Bulbs
Equipment for People with Disabilities
Fuel Supplies
Office and Educational Furniture
Office Stationery/Equipment
Protective Clothing and Footwear
Signage
Street Furniture
Telephones
Vehicles

Works

Maintenance and Refurbishment Works to Schools, Offices and Council Establishments
Miscellaneous Construction Contracts
Engineering Works to Roads and Footways

HOW THE COUNCIL BUYS

The Council's procurement arrangements are mainly organised on departmental lines, with co-ordination of common contracts and strategic oversight of procurement through the Council by the Strategic Procurement Officer who is based in the Financial Services Directorate. The Council's Directorates are:-

- ◆ Chief Executive's
- ◆ Educational Services
- ◆ Environmental Services
- ◆ Corporate Services
- ◆ Social Services
- ◆ Financial Services

All contracts must comply with UK law and the Council's Standing Orders which govern its contracting activities and lay down procedures for obtaining quotations and tenders, awarding contracts etc.

Contracts for works, services or supplies must be let complying with EU Procurement Directives, which have been incorporated into UK law. The Directives apply to all contracts exceeding certain financial thresholds (approximately £154,000 in respect of contracts for goods and services; £3.8m for works contracts). For most contracts covered by the Directives, we are required to follow strict procedures, involving an initial tender notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

OJEU is only available in electronic form, either on CD Rom or via Internet access. You can get further information from the following website: <http://ted.eur-op.eu.int/static/home/en/homepage.ini>. Subscription enquiries should be addressed to the Stationery Officer on 0870 600 5522.

The Council generally uses a restricted procedure for these tenders, involving a pre-qualification phase, with tenders being invited only from those applicants who meet certain predetermined criteria including financial stability, track record and equalities.

THE APPROVED LIST

Worcestershire County Council maintains an Approved List of Contractors and consultants from which companies are selected to tender for works that fall below EU thresholds by Property Services.

When Council Departments require works to be carried out under EU thresholds they will use the Approved List to obtain the names of suitable firms that they can approach to tender. Tenderers are chosen on a selection/rotation basis, although Council Officers are able to nominate companies based on their previous quality of work and tendering performance.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE APPROVED LIST

If your company would like to apply for a place on the Council's Approved List you are required to go through an application process to verify your suitability. In the first place, you should write to

Property Services
Worcestershire County Council
County Hall
Spetchley Road
WORCESTER
WR5 2NP

Tel: 01905 766400

If your application is successful you will be added to the Approved List and sent a letter of confirmation stating the categories of work you have been approved for.

From time to time the List may be closed for review and housekeeping purposes. You should verify that companies are still being considered by contacting Property Services on the above mentioned telephone numbers.

INFORMATION REQUESTED ON THE INFORMATION FORM FOR APPROVED/SELECT LIST TENDERS

If your company applies to go on to the Council's Approved list or expresses an interest in an OJEU advertised Select List Tender, you will be asked to complete the relevant application form giving Company details, financial and technical background and information covering Equalities, Health and Safety and your Environmental Policy. The application form is split into a number of sections:

Company	You are asked basic information about where your firm is based, legal status, parent company details (if applicable), numbers of directors and the number of staff you employ. We also require evidence of insurance covering risk indemnity.
Technical	You are asked to provide technical information in support of your application and list details of contracts carried out over the previous 3 years and provide the names and addresses of proposed referees. If you are members of a registered trade association or any approved body you will be asked for copies of your membership certificates. We will also require details of your quality systems.
Financial	You are asked to submit audited accounts for the last 3 years. If you are a new company and do not have audited accounts you can still apply, but tendering opportunities will be limited.
Equalities	The Council's spending power helps generate thousands of jobs and the Council has a duty to ensure that public money is not spent on practices that lead to unfair discrimination. To address this the application form includes an Equal Opportunities Declaration document which asks questions as set down by the Secretary of State, and requests information on ownership.
Health & Safety	The application form asks for details of your Health and Safety policies and procedures together with any codes of safe working practices issued to employees.
Sustainability	As a large purchaser of goods and services the Council is looking to address the environmental impact of its activities and develop awareness of environmental issues into all its services. It is the Council's policy to encourage suppliers to help us meet our objectives and therefore we ask for your policy to be submitted with your application for evaluation. We encourage prospective suppliers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify less environmentally damaging products • Promote greater use of renewable resources • Use environmentally friendly practices throughout the production process

Please note that being accepted on the Council's Approved list is no guarantee of work

TENDERING FOR CONTRACTS

If you are selected to tender you will usually be sent documentation consisting of the following:

- Letter of Invitation
- Instructions to Tenderer – this document details tender dates and times, method of tender return, evaluation criteria and details where tender queries should be directed
- Tender Questionnaire – this document covers basic financial, technical and company information
- Specification – this details the Council's requirements and must be complied with
- Contract conditions – this gives details of the terms and conditions under which the Council wishes to do business
- Price Schedule/Details of Offer

Whichever procedure the Council follows, you must read the information supplied carefully and submit all the documentation requested by the stipulated return date. The success of your bid is determined by the quality of this information.

The tender documents are all opened at the same time. They are then evaluated in a comprehensive, equitable, auditable and transparent manner. To ensure fairness the criteria and method used will be clearly defined before evaluation commences. The Council will normally award the contract to the supplier it considers offers Best Value, having regard to price, quality etc.

The Council is always prepared to debrief unsuccessful tenderers to assist them in developing their abilities to tender for future contracts.

TENDERING TIPS

- Read the advertisement carefully and submit a request in writing for the information required by the dates stipulated by the Council.
- In completing a questionnaire, make sure that you provide all the information requested and answer all questions accurately.
- Return the tender by the closing date and time specified. Late tenders will not be considered.
- Respond promptly to any requests for further information.

The tender documents the Council send out to suppliers contain details of our requirements. You should read these documents and make sure that you fully understand the requirements. If you do not understand any part of the specification you should contact the Council Officer named in the tender documentation by the stipulated date and request further information.

CONTRACT MONITORING

The Council is continuously striving to improve its own performance and it expects contractors to do the same. There are procedures in place for monitoring the performance of all main contractors and sub-contractors carrying out works for the Council. All companies are monitored to assess their compliance with pre-defined performance criteria. You should be aware that Contract Conditions are to be strictly adhered to especially with regard to quality, health and safety and general performance.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Educational Services:	
Corporate Services:	
Environmental Services:	
Financial Services:	
Social Services:	
Property Services:	
Strategic Procurement:	Michael Howard 01905 766507 mhoward@worcestershire.gov.uk

*For more information about the Council please see the Worcestershire website: **www.worcestershire.gov.uk***

How to do Business with Worcestershire County Council

This leaflet has been produced by the Council's Strategic Procurement Officer, who is part of the Financial Services Directorate. His role is to develop and implement procurement strategy and policy across the Council.

For further information please write to:

Strategic Procurement Officer
Worcestershire County Council
PO Box 374
County Hall
Spetchley Road
WORCESTER
WR5 2XF