

How to do business with Medway Council

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1. Introduction	3
2. Procurement in Medway Council	5
3. Procurement regulations and rules	8
4. Procurement process	8
5. How we advertise	10
6. ProContract tendering system	12
7. Key stages of the tender process	13
8. Information required	15
9. Tendering tips	19
10. Useful links	21

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first edition of How to do Business with Medway Council. This guide has been produced to:

- Assist suppliers in understanding the obligations placed on Medway Council in the procurement of goods, services and works.
- Direct suppliers on where to find the opportunities to do business with Medway Council
- Provide an overview of our procurement processes and the requirements of our suppliers and contractors
- Provide some useful tips and information when submitting quotations and tenders.

Medway Council spends approximately £230million a year on goods, services, and works providing local and national businesses with a wide range of commercial opportunities.

The procurement activities and processes of the council are fundamental to service improvement and delivery and ensuring Officers are '*spending public money better*' for the people of Medway.

The council is committed to a rigorous procurement process, that emphasises the principles of:

- value for money;
- sustainability;
- transparency, fairness and equality;
- best practice;
- legality (e.g. in accordance with EU Procurement Regulations);
- confidentiality, subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

We want to make it easier to do business with Medway Council, encouraging new suppliers, invigorating existing providers and creating competition where suppliers feel they are competing in a fair and transparent environment.

We hope this guide gives you an insight into doing business with Medway and that you will find the information useful.

Category Management Team

2 PROCUREMENT IN MEDWAYCOUNCIL

CATEGORY MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Medway Council has adopted a Category Management approach to procurement as part of the Council's 'Better for Less' Programme.

Put simply it is a way of managing the council's spend by grouping together related goods and services in categories and ensuring that any future approach, decisions and contracts are made on a strategic category-by-category basis with a view to maximising quality, benefit and value across the council.

The creation of the Category Management Team shows the council's commitment and investment in this approach to allow greater flexibility and creativity to procurement whilst appropriately managing risk.

WHAT WE BUY

Category Management in the council is delivered through three overarching categories:

Strategy and Operational Support

- Consultancy
- Clothing
- Facilities management services
- Vehicle management
- Furniture and soft furnishing
- Health and safety
- Human resources
- ICT
- Legal services
- Mail services
- Stationery
- Catering
- Cleaning and janitorial
- Utilities
- Procurement legislation and governance
- Best practice and innovation

People

- Social and community care
- Healthcare

- Housing support
- Education
- Community advisory services
- Arts and leisure services

Place and Projects

- Cemetery and crematorium
- Construction/works
- Environmental services
- Highway equipment and materials
- Horticultural
- Housing management
- Passenger transport
- Street and traffic management
- Complex and significant projects
- Sports and playground
- Equipment and maintenance

3 PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS AND RULES

Like other public sector organisations and local authorities, Medway Council has to comply with European and UK Procurement Regulations, in addition to its own Contract Procedure Rules that govern how the council buys goods, services and works.

The councils Contract Procedure Rules can be viewed in full via the councils website: www.medway.gov.uk/thecouncilanddemocracy/council/constitution.aspx

4 PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The council's Contract Procedure Rules determine how any procurement exercise will be carried out. The complexity of the procurement process followed will vary dependant on the value and risk of the requirement.

In order to determine the appropriate Gateway Category (and subsequent process to be followed) the total value of the goods, services or works over the life of the contract is used.

The table below summaries the procurement thresholds and processes within Medway Council.

PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS AND PROCESSES

CATEGORY A PROCUREMENTS				
LEVEL	THRESHOLD	RISK	REQUIREMENT	LEAD
1	0 - £10K	Low	Minimum One Quotation	Service
2	£10K – 100K		Minimum Three Quotations	Category Management
CATEGORY B PROCUREMENTS (Subject to the Procurement Gateway Process)				
3	£100K+	Medium	Invitation to Tender*	Category Management
4	Any project deemed 'High Risk' by Procurement Board	High	Invitation to Tender*	Category Management

*Requirements above the EU Procurement Thresholds will be subject to the full EU Public Procurement Procedures.

5 HOW WE ADVERTISE

Kent Business Portal

The Council advertises all contract opportunities with a value of over £10k using the Kent Business Portal. We are delighted to have moved to The Kent Business Portal, where a supplier only needs to register once to receive alerts about any contracting opportunities within Medway and other neighbouring local authorities and emergency services such as:



Supplier Benefits on the Kent Business Portal also include:

- free registration (one time only);
- email notification of opportunities;
- access to the Tendering System and Contract Store.

In addition to the above all requirements above £100K are advertised on the council's website and in the OJEU (where above the EU tender thresholds).

The council may also (where appropriate) advertise via one of the following to increase awareness and competition:

- a dedicated contracts publication;
- the local press or a relevant trade journal;
- Voluntary and Community Sector circulation list or website.

When the council advertises a forthcoming requirement, it will clearly detail how and by when interested suppliers should express their interest.

The council often organises 'Meet the Buyer' and 'Pre Tender Dialogue' Events – upcoming events are also advertised via the Kent Business Portal.

6 PROCONTRACT TENDERING SYSTEM

To support the Governments overarching recommendations for electronic delivery of services and information (mandatory under the EU Regulations by 2016) Medway Council has implemented the ProContract eTendering System to manage its quotation and tender processes above £10K.



Supplier benefits include:

- receiving Pre-Qualification questionnaires, requests for quotations and invitations to tender electronically;
- ability to submit your quotations and tender responses electronically (including revisions and Q and As);
- reduction in your paper and associated printing costs;
- proven added security and knowledge that your submission has been delivered.

7 KEY STAGES OF THE TENDER PROCESS

Bidding for the council's tenders and contracts may often seem testing, but each stage of the process is necessary. We are keen to make sure the public money we spend on behalf of Medway residents goes further, and therefore seek to ensure each contract let is on the basis of value for money.

PROCUREMENT APPRAISAL

The council defines its aims, decides what is needed, and clearly specifies this within a business case (Gateway Report) that also sets out how the procurement exercise will be carried out taking account such factors as market conditions, legislation and council procedures etc.

SEEKING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The council may invite suppliers to submit expressions of interest in a contract in response to an advert published on the Kent Business Portal (or other media as advertised).

PREQUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE (PQQ)

In some cases, suppliers have to pre-qualify before being invited to tender. They answer a questionnaire and supply information about their financial status, previous experience and references, etc. to

enable the council to ensure any short-listed suppliers have the capability and capacity to perform the contract.

INVITING TENDERS

The council invites suppliers to put in an offer (tender) either in response to an advert or based on those suppliers being short-listed at the PQQ stage.

EVALUATION

The council evaluates the tenders against pre-agreed criteria (quality/cost) that will have been published as part of the tender documentation.

AWARD

The council awards the contract to the supplier whose bid offers the most economically advantageous tender (as per the criteria agreed and published).

PERFORMING AND MANAGING THE CONTRACT

The contractor performs the contract and the council manages it, monitoring the contractor's performance and compliance throughout.

8 INFORMATION REQUIRED

PRE QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE (PQQ)

Where a PQQ stage is being used, the council is likely to request information about your company, such as:

- **Company details** - including registration information and information about parent companies, partners and associates.
- **Information about any legal proceedings** against the company, including pending judgements.
- **Financial information** – You are normally asked to provide details from your last two or three years accounts to enable the council to ensure your company has the financial standing to perform the contract.

The council recognises that some potential suppliers such as SMEs may have been recently formed and as such are unable to provide these accounts. Where this is the case other information may be requested that is considered sufficient for the council to assess

- **Insurance liability cover** – you will be required to evidence (or confirm you are willing to obtain) the necessary insurance cover, including public liability, employer’s liability and where appropriate professional indemnity. The value of the cover required will be stated in the documentation.
- **Quality, training and environmental systems**
- **Technical Assessments** – You will be asked to demonstrate past experience in delivering similar contracts, this may include the provision of references and previous examples of goods, services or works supplied etc.
- **Equality and Diversity** – You will be asked to demonstrate your commitment to equality and diversity by providing copies of your relevant policies and procedures, in addition to declaring any findings of unlawful discrimination against your company.
- **Health and safety policies and procedures**

INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT)

The Invitation to Tender (ITT) 'package' is likely to contain several documents to help you to fully understand the councils requirement, the procurement process and to bid accordingly.

Where a PQQ has not been used, a number of the elements above are also likely to be requested.

The ITT will include:

Instructions and timetable: gives you guidance on how to complete your tender response and an overview of the key stages of the procurement.

Specification and questionnaire: the specification is a key part of the ITT documentation that describes the goods; services or works the council requires you to provide. Additional questions may be asked to enable you to describe; demonstrate and evidence how they would fulfill the council's requirements.

Evaluation criteria: the council's criteria for evaluating the suppliers' bids, including the relevant weightings and percentages allocated to the different elements of the bid e.g. quality/price will always be included.

Contract terms and conditions: the conditions specify the terms that will govern the contract between the council and your company if you are successful in your tender.

Form of tender: this document confirms that you are offering to supply the council goods and services in accordance with the tender documentation.

9 TENDERING TIPS

1. Read our advertisements carefully. If the quotation/tender documents are not available for immediate download there will normally be an overview of the council's requirement for you to consider as to whether your company could carry out the contract.
2. There will usually be contact details available. If necessary contact the member of the Category Management Team responsible to talk through the requirements, this will save you valuable time and effort tendering for a contract that you cannot realistically complete.
3. Read everything within the quotation/tender package and make sure you understand what is required - address any questions you have as soon as possible and before the deadline stated.
4. Ensure that you follow the instructions as advised – if in doubt, ask for advice.
5. Ensure that you tailor your submission to the actual tender (and the council) – generic submissions or submissions

made up purely of your company's promotional literature will not score good marks.

6. Ensure you understand the council's evaluation criteria stated in the tender documents – weightings and percentages etc. The higher the weighting, the more important it is to the council.
7. Set aside enough time to compile your tender submission and remember that it will probably require input from different areas of your business e.g. Sales, Finance, Health and Safety etc.
8. You may want to get someone who hasn't written the tender to be a 'critical friend' and comment on whether you have answered the question fully.
9. Make sure your submission and all requested attachments are completely uploaded before the quotation/tender closing time.
10. Seek feedback – the council will look to provide constructive feedback that will inform you how to improve any future submissions.

10 USEFUL LINKS



Kent Business Portal
www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk



Chamber of Commerce
www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk



Federation of Small Businesses
www.fsb.org.uk/kentandmedway

