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Planning

Cafe Concession - Kielder Castle

Forestry Commission

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-014502

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-06567b

Published 17 February 2026, 4:35pm

Scope

Reference

FCCN003937

Description

Forestry England are seeking an organisation to operate the Café Concession at Kielder Castle. The operator will be required to serve hot and cold food and beverages to members of the public visiting Kielder Forest.

Kielder Water & Forest Park is the largest Forestry England landholding at 62,500 hectares of forest, with the overall area attracting an estimated 500,000 visits per year from the north England, south Scotland and further afield.

The Kielder Castle Café is located within the ground floor of Kielder Castle. The Café will have indoor seating capacity for approximately 60 covers and an area of outdoor seating to the front of the castle. Indoor covers are split between the main café area and the additional seating area, both fall part of the lease boundary.

Currently we anticipate the lease period being 10 years in duration, the lease Heads of Terms will be available in the tender documents which we expect to be published March/April 2026.

The total value of the lease opportunity over the term is expected to be in the region of £3,000,000

We are seeking an operator to commence the lease from Summer 2026 with the concession opening to the public late Summer/ early Autumn 2026 subject to the completion of the refurbishment works and operator fit out.

Total value (estimated)

- £3,000,000 excluding VAT
- £3,600,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 13 July 2026 to 17 December 2036
- 10 years, 5 months, 5 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 55330000 - Cafeteria services

Contract locations

- UKD - North West (England)
 - UKC - North East (England)
-

Engagement

Engagement deadline

16 March 2026

Engagement process description

As part of the Cafe Concession opportunity, we will be holding a scheduled site visit for prospective suppliers to view the cafe premises on the 11th March 2026. Suppliers wishing to attend must register their interest.

The purpose of the visit is to engage with the market and gather general feedback on the opportunity, this may include proposed layout ideas and potential fit out considerations, proposed lease plan and indicative timelines.

This preliminary market engagement is intended to help us better understand market interest and practical considerations ahead of the formal tender process.

Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest should be submitted via email to alexis.lintott@forestryengland.uk. Following consideration of the initial expressions of interest, Forestry England may wish to engage in further soft market testing with respondents.

Therefore, at this stage the scope of the lease and lease duration is still subject to change based on feedback from the market.

This prior information notice does not commit Forestry England to any future procurement or any subsequent decisions based on the output of the market sounding exercise. Forestry England reserves the right not to proceed to a formal procurement process.

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

16 March 2026

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Forestry Commission

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLRM-7846-HGLG

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Bristol

BS16 1EJ

United Kingdom

Telephone: 0300 067 4000

Email: commercial.services@forestryengland.uk

Region: UKK12 - Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government