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Planning

Operating The Blackwood Miner's Institute

Caerphilly County Borough Council

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

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Scope

Reference

PME1000003

Description

Blackwood Miners' Institute (BMI) is a cultural landmark with a proud history. Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) is looking to appoint an external operator to lead the artistic, cultural, community, and commercial activity of this Grade II listed historic venue.

The Council is undertaking preliminary market engagement to explore future operating models for Blackwood Miners' Institute. This engagement exercise invites organisations with experience in cultural, arts, heritage, or venue management to attend a site visit to the BMI.

Through this early market engagement, CCBC aims to give interested organisations

meaningful insight into Blackwood Miners' Institute, its spaces, its capabilities, and its cultural role. The process is designed to offer inspiration and practical understanding so that potential bidders can explore what operating models might be possible. By experiencing the venue first-hand and learning about the opportunities and challenges it presents, organisations will be better placed to consider how their skills, vision, and approach could form a viable and sustainable operating solution.

Following the site visits, interested organisations will be required to submit an Expression of Interest. CCBC will then publish the full tender documents, which will set out the detailed requirements for the opportunity. Once tender submissions have been received, they will be evaluated in line with the stated criteria and the preferred operator will be identified.

Total value (estimated)

- £1,500,000 excluding VAT
- £1,800,000 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 18 January 2027 to 18 January 2032
- Possible extension to 18 January 2037
- 10 years, 1 day

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 70130000 - Letting services of own property
- 70220000 - Non-residential property renting or leasing services
- 70332200 - Commercial property management services
- 92100000 - Motion picture and video services
- 92300000 - Entertainment services
- 92522000 - Preservation services of historical sites and buildings

Contract locations

- UKL16 - Gwent Valleys

Engagement

Engagement deadline

26 March 2026

Engagement process description

Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) is undertaking preliminary market engagement with organisations interested in occupying and operating Blackwood Miners' Institute (BMI) as a cultural and heritage venue.

The Council is looking to appoint an external operator to lead the artistic, cultural, community, and commercial activity of BMI, ensuring its long-term sustainability while protecting its heritage and public value. This opportunity will play a vital role in strengthening cultural participation, supporting community engagement, nurturing creative talent, and contributing to town centre regeneration, while preserving an iconic historic asset for future generations.

The external operator will be responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the Institute, including artistic programming, staffing, audience development, commercial activity, and venue hire, working in partnership with the Council. CCBC will remain landlord and custodian of the building, retaining responsibility for long-term stewardship and major structural maintenance.

The Council is seeking suitable organisations that can deliver ambitious, inclusive, and high-quality cultural programming, develop audiences and community participation, support artist development and creative learning, and generate sustainable income through commercial and event activity. The ability to operate a multi-purpose venue, manage diverse spaces, and balance public value with commercial viability is essential.

As part of this market engagement, the Council is sharing headline operational data from 2025 to help prospective operators understand the scale and scope of activity at Blackwood Miners' Institute:

- 37,111 tickets sold
- 36,349 audience attendees
- £517,868.54 net income
- 164 performances delivered
- 82% average performance capacity

This is an opportunity to work in close partnership with the Council to co-design and deliver a refreshed operating model that will secure the long-term future of Blackwood Miners' Institute. We want to collaborate with organisations who share our commitment to inclusive, creative, and community-focused cultural provision.

Depending on the operating model proposed and following further legal assessment it is anticipated that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) may apply. If TUPE is applicable, eligible staff currently assigned to the operation of BMI may have the right to transfer to the successful external operator on their existing terms and conditions.

Organisations wishing to attend a planned site visit to the Blackwood Miners' Institute on either Wednesday, 11 March 2026, or Wednesday, 18 March 2026, must register their attendance no later than three working days before their chosen visit date.

The deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest is 12:00 noon on Thursday, 26 March 2026.

The deadline for submitting any questions prior to the Expression of Interest is 12:00 noon on Monday, 23 March 2026.

Further details, including timescales and submission requirements, will be issued as part of this tendering process.

Organisations interested in attending a site visit and/or submitting an Expression of Interest to tender can contact the Council by Dialogue on the Find-a-Tender Service, Proactis.

A link to Proactis is provided below:

Logon:

<https://supplierlive.proactisp2p.com/Account/Login>

Registration Link:

<https://supplierlive.proactisp2p.com/Account/Registration/Register>

Participation

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

20 April 2026

Procedure

Special regime

Concession

Contracting authority

Caerphilly County Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PWHP-2369-JPYL

Penallta House, Tredomen Park

Hengoed

CF82 7PG

United Kingdom

Contact name: Marc de Graaf

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Website: <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk>

Region: UKL16 - Gwent Valleys

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Devolved regulations that apply: Wales