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Tender

Development & Funding Partner to develop the Birkenhead Heat Network

Wirral Council

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-033995

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-052272 ([view related notices](#))

Published 20 June 2025, 11:09am

Scope

Description

The project comprises development of a new heat network serving a mix of buildings including new build residential, existing residential, new build commercial and existing commercial.

The project forms an integral part of Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework; one of the biggest brownfield redevelopment sites in the UK. This regeneration of Birkenhead will take place across nine areas providing 21,000 new homes and almost 1,000,000 square metres of employment space over the next 20 years.

The area to be served by the network has been identified as a 'priority district heating zone' in Wirral's Local Plan. It will make a significant contribution to reducing the carbon impact of new / existing development in the Borough and provide opportunities to residents and businesses for lower cost heating. The project is well-aligned with regional policy objectives and initiatives. It also fits into the Government's introduction of 'heat network zoning', which, through implementation, will mandate certain types of buildings in identified urban areas such as Birkenhead to connect to district heating within a prescribed timeframe.

It is envisaged that, once heat networking zoning is in place, the Birkenhead Heat Network could benefit from zoning 'incumbency' rules - meaning that nearby eligible buildings will be mandated to connect, further securing demand.

The project will be delivered through Wirral Council procuring a Development Partner. The Council and Development Partner will enter into a Development Agreement under which the Development Partner will further develop its proposals for the heat network. The Development Agreement will set out a number of requirements which the project must meet in order to proceed into an approvals gateway process. If the project proceeds beyond the development period (i.e. is "approved" as part of the approvals gateway process), the Council and Development Partner will become shareholders in the ESCo, albeit that the Council's shareholding will be limited to a "Golden Share".

The ESCo will be the supplier of heat to a number of public and private sector bodies (including the Council) under separate heat connection and supply agreements.

The Council will not be investing in the project. The Golden Share will simply allow the Council to exercise control in relation to a limited number of reserved matters including carbon intensity, reporting and tariffs.

The ESCo will be required to source all capital funding for the project. The ESCo partner will be appointed in perpetuity. The revenue derived over the first 40 years of the network is estimated to be in the region of £200 million (excluding VAT) / £240 million (including VAT) - £250 million (excluding VAT) / £300 million (including VAT). This includes all phases and connected buildings in the core scheme and allowing for further expansion with the wider geographic area. The estimated value cannot be guaranteed and so should not be relied upon by interested parties which might subsequently choose to pursue this procurement. Any interested party should make their own independent commercial enquires, estimates, judgements and decisions associated with this project.

As part of the operation and expansion of the project, a range of customers in the Birkenhead area may seek to use the heat network, including a mix of public sector and private sector entities. It is intended that this project will be available to those other entities. Those entities may include:

Sixth form colleges

Central government departments (responsible for local offices)

Higher education organisations

NHS Primary Care bodies

Total value (estimated)

- £250,000,000 excluding VAT
- £300,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2069
- 43 years

Main procurement category

Services

Additional procurement category

Works

CPV classifications

- 09323000 - District heating
- 45000000 - Construction work
- 65000000 - Public utilities
- 71314000 - Energy and related services
- 71500000 - Construction-related services

Contract locations

- UKD74 - Wirral

Participation

Legal and financial capacity conditions of participation

Please refer to tender documentation.

Technical ability conditions of participation

Please refer to tender documentation.

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Submission type

Requests to participate

Deadline for requests to participate

29 July 2025, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

How to obtain and submit documents:

The Council's uses The Chest e-tendering system <https://www.the-chest.org.uk/>

Tender documentation is available free of charge via The Chest. Project Reference: DN776854.

Tender responses must be returned, and any clarifications/questions raised, through this same system.

The tender documentation contains full instructions for participation, full details of the Project opportunity, both selection and award criteria, and the procurement timeline and process.

Please allow sufficient time before the submission deadline to upload and submit your response through The Chest.

Help and Support - Proactis/The Chest: In the event that suppliers require assistance with the use of or access to the Council's e-tendering portal, please go to <https://www.the-chest.org.uk/SupplierSupport.html>. Here there will be a hyperlink to log issues or 'submit a ticket' for ProContract V3.

Alternatively, calls can be logged by emailing ProContractSuppliers@proactis.com and a representative will contact you as soon as possible.

For critical and time-sensitive issues (normally requiring resolution within 60 minutes) then please call 0330 005 0352. This telephone number is attended 09.00 - 17.30 Monday to Friday.

All communication (queries or clarifications) including your tender response is to go through the Council's e-tendering portal www.the-chest.org.uk and not addressed directly to individual Council employees or any Council agent by email or otherwise.

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

31 March 2026

Award criteria

Name	Type
Technical and Commercial (Qualitative)	Quality
Commercial (Quantitative)	Cost
Social Value and Market Transformation	Quality
Legal	Quality

Weighting description

Technical and Commercial (Qualitative) = 72%

Commercial (Quantitative) = 8%

Social Value and Market Transformation = 10%

Legal = 10%

Further detail is provided in the tender documentation.

Other information

Applicable trade agreements

- Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Competitive flexible procedure

Competitive flexible procedure description

This Competitive Flexible Procedure will be conducted in five (5) stages. The stages consist of:

Stage 1: Conditions of Participation

Stage 1 commenced with the issuing of this Tender Notice and the publication of the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

The ITT includes a Procurement Specific Questionnaire ("PSQ") at Appendix D: Procurement Specific Questionnaire which all Suppliers are required to complete and return in accordance with the Procurement Timetable and instructions within the ITT.

Wirral Council will undertake a review of the completed PSQ with reference to any information held on the Central Digital Platform. Responses to the Conditions of Participation will be assessed in accordance with Appendix D: Procurement Specific

Questionnaire. Further details of this are set out in Section 13 (Conditions of Participation) of the ITT.

The assessment of these responses will identify up to three Suppliers to be invited to participate in Stage 2. The process for identifying the three Suppliers is set out in paragraphs 13.13 and 13.14 of the ITT, together with minimum score requirements in 13.12.

Stage 2: Interim Tender Response Phase (incorporating initial dialogue meetings)

Suppliers shortlisted at Stage 1 will be invited to an initial meeting. The anticipated agenda for the initial meeting is as follows:

- (a) introduce the Promoter's Officers and commercial, legal and technical advisors;
- (b) meet the Supplier's Team; and
- (c) to discuss/answer questions on the core elements of the scheme.

Following the initial meeting, Suppliers will be required to submit an Interim Tender Response in accordance with the instructions set out in the ITT. The Interim Tender Response shall consist of a detailed mark-up of the Contract Documentation and a commentary table explaining the rationale of the mark-up. Interim Tender Responses will not be formally evaluated but verbal feedback will be provided to Suppliers during dialogue meetings.

Stage 3: Dialogue Meetings

It is expected that there will be two dialogue meetings with each Supplier. The purpose of the dialogue meetings is to discuss Suppliers' comments and proposed amendments to the draft Contractual Documentation. Further detail on the agenda for the dialogue meetings is set out in paragraph 7.3 of the ITT.

If required, a third dialogue meeting may be held with each Supplier.

Wirral Council may refine the award criteria in the ITT during or following dialogue meetings with Suppliers. If Wirral Council refines the award criteria, it will notify all Suppliers to any changes made to the award criteria when issuing the Invitation to Submit Final Tenders (ISFT).

Stage 4: Invitation to Submit a Final Tender Response

Suppliers will be required to submit their Final Tender Response in accordance with the instructions set out in the ISFT.

Suppliers must respond to all of the Technical, Commercial and Social Value questions set out in Appendix B: Award Criteria of the ITT.

Suppliers' Final Tender Responses will be evaluated in accordance with the assessment methodology set out in Appendix C: Assessment Methodology of the ITT.

Wirral Council will conduct an assessment of all Final Tender Responses in order to identify the Supplier which has submitted the Most Advantageous Tender.

Stage 5: Preferred Supplier Stage

Following conclusion of Stage 4, the Promoter will provide an assessment summary to all Suppliers that submitted Final Tender Responses to:

? inform them whether they have been successful in the Procurement;

? provide an explanation of the assessment of the Supplier's tender against the relevant award criteria, in accordance with the requirements of the Act;

? where different to the Supplier concerned, provide information in respect of the Most Advantageous Tender submitted, including details of the assessment of this tender against the relevant award criteria and the Supplier's name; and

? engage in further discussions with the Supplier who the Promoter considers to have the Most Advantageous Tender (the "Preferred Supplier") in order to finalise the Contractual Documentation, in accordance with the limitations set out in the Act.

Notwithstanding the above, Suppliers should note that any further discussions held with the Preferred Supplier will be solely for the purpose of finalising the Contractual Documentation based on their Final Tender Response and will not be an opportunity for further negotiation.

Justification for not publishing a preliminary market engagement notice

Preliminary market engagement was conducted under Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Contracting authority

Wirral Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PBCP-8675-BHWT

Town Hall, Brighton Street

Wallasey

CH44 8ED

United Kingdom

Email: procurementcorporate@wirral.gov.uk

Region: UKD74 - Wirral

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Other organisations

These organisations are carrying out the procurement, or part of it, on behalf of the contracting authorities.

CARBON TRUST ADVISORY LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Commercial Advisors

- Companies House: 06274284
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PTNX-7148-XRPT

Level 5, Arbor

London

SE1 9AX

United Kingdom

Email: tenders@carbontrust.com

Website: <http://www.carbontrust.com>

Region: UKI44 - Lewisham and Southwark

WOMBLE BOND DICKINSON (UK) LLP

Summary of their role in this procurement: Legal Advisors

- Companies House: OC317661
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYBM-6288-WNYY

4 More London Riverside

London

SE1 1AU

United Kingdom

Email: richard.cockburn@wbd-uk.com

Website: <http://www.womblebonddickinson.com>

Region: UKI44 - Lewisham and Southwark

Contact organisation

Contact Wirral Council for any enquiries.