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Planning

Business Support Services

Essex County Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-049136

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0588ec

Published 15 August 2025, 1:27pm

Scope

Description

Essex County Council (ECC) currently has a business support contract in place that is due to expire in March 2026, alongside our nationally funded Growth Hub contract. ECC is seeking input from potential bidders to help shape a suitable contract and procurement process.

The current contract is split into three main areas:

- 1) General Business Support
- 2) Business Financial Advice and Support
- 3) Skills Consultancy and Brokerage Service

As part of that the current contract, the scope of the services include:

- Delivering a clear programme of business support to ensure the safeguarding of businesses and jobs impacted by the challenging economic climate
- Providing high-quality provision that enables business and jobs growth to increase the

prosperity and productivity of Essex

- Supporting Essex businesses to be innovative and sustainable
- Providing the best possible support to mitigate impacts and exploit opportunities arising from the economic challenges faced by businesses

The services listed above relate to the current contract and do not necessarily represent the scope of a contract that may be advertised in the future. The structure of the contract also has not been confirmed and the value of any future contract that may be advertised in the future may differ from the value attached to this notice. This is not a call for competition.

Total value (estimated)

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

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027
- Possible extension to 31 March 2029
- 3 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 66000000 - Financial and insurance services
- 79000000 - Business services: law, marketing, consulting, recruitment, printing and security

Contract locations

- UKH3 - Essex

Engagement

Engagement deadline

5 September 2025

Engagement process description

Essex County Council is conducting soft market testing to inform the development of our future business support offer.

The Council currently has a business support contract in place that will expire in March 2026, alongside our nationally funded Growth Hub contract.

With changes underway in the business support landscape-including the introduction of the national Business Growth Service-we are seeking input to help shape a suitable contract and procurement process.

As part of the Council's pre-procurement work, market engagement for the development of a new countywide business support service has already conducted with businesses who may use the service, via a comprehensive survey. This survey enabled us to better understand the current challenges that businesses are facing, what they would want from a business support offer, growth prospects, business support functions, and many other metrics.

The Council would now like to hear from potential bidders. To respond to soft market testing please complete the questionnaire found here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/RPe5nEf3vv> The deadline for responses is Friday 5th September.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Contracting authority

Essex County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PWVM-4844-NRQH

County Hall, Market Road

Chelmsford

CM1 1QH

United Kingdom

Email: melody.mahachi@essex.gov.uk

Region: UKH36 - Heart of Essex

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

