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Contract

PL0093 - Project THRIVE

Essex County Council

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-049746

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04b53c

Published 19 August 2025, 10:53am

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Essex County Council

County Hall, Market Road

Chelmsford

CM1 1QH

Contact

Mr Ryan Morley

Email

ryan.morley@essex.gov.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKH3 - Essex

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/>

Buyer's address

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Regional or local authority

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

PL0093 - Project THRIVE

Reference number

DN751265

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 60112000 - Public road transport services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

Project THRIVE - A research project that will investigate and evaluate a range of initiatives

which aim to grow patronage on bus services.

Essex County Council (ECC) has been allocated £4.9m in 2023/24 and £4.9m in 2024/25

from Department for Transport (DfT) Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP+) funding,

this BSIP+ funding will be used to support a range of initiatives that were set out in the Essex

Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The Thrive research project was originally set out in the Essex County Council Bus Service

Improvement Plan 2021-2026 which was published in 2021. The aim of the Thrive research

project is to explore what targeted measures may drive growth in market town bus services.

This data led project will test a range of initiatives and assess which has the greatest impact

on driving passenger growth.

ECC must ensure that all funding conditions under the BSIP+ Funding agreement are complied with - As defined in the BSIP Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) :

3.2 The Authority may use the funding to target it on the actions that they – and local

operators through their Enhanced Partnership (where relevant) – believe will deliver the best

overall outcomes in growing long term patronage, revenues and thus maintaining service

levels, whilst maintaining essential social and economic connectivity for local communities.

In some places that may involve ensuring existing connections are maintained (either by conventional services or DRT). Elsewhere it might be achieved through increasing the

frequency on key corridors or the operating hours of some services whilst reducing others;
or

reducing fares or introducing new local concessions to open up new markets and revenue.

3.3 The funding must be spent on bus measures.

3.6 The funding should not be used to support generic marketing or advertising costs that are not directly related to specific improvements (such as a fares change, or new services).

ECC intend to utilise a minimal SSQ which will assess Potential Supplier Information and Exclusion Grounds.

Please Note - Due to the nature of the funding we are unable to provide an estimate of the value per Lot.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £2,000,000

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Route Specific Marketing

Lot No

1

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 60112000 - Public road transport services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH3 - Essex

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 1 - Route Specific Marketing

Targeted, route specific traditional marketing campaign, including route specific advertising, leaflet dropping and involvement of local councils to assist promotion (e.g. assist with promotion at transport hubs, tourist centres, etc).

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: ITT Technical / Quality / Weighting: 45

Quality criterion - Name: Social Value / Weighting: 5

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Digital Only Promotion

Lot No

2

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 60112000 - Public road transport services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH3 - Essex

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 2 - Digital Only Promotion

Digital and social media only promotion / marketing

Please Note - The Authority elected not to award a contract for this Tender Lot.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: ITT Technical / Quality / Weighting: 45

Quality criterion - Name: Social Value / Weighting: 5

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Better Information

Lot No

3

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 60112000 - Public road transport services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH3 - Essex

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 3 - Better Information

Better information at every bus stop , through parishes, bus user groups, businesses, schools, clubs and communities.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: ITT Technical / Quality / Weighting: 45

Quality criterion - Name: Social Value / Weighting: 5

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Increased Frequency

Lot No

4

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 60112000 - Public road transport services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH3 - Essex

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Lot 4 - Increased Frequency

Such as running the service every 30 minutes instead of hourly.

Please Note - The Authority elected not to award a contract for this Tender Lot.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: ITT Technical / Quality / Weighting: 45

Quality criterion - Name: Social Value / Weighting: 5

Price - Weighting: 50

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

Notice number: [2024/S 000-036313](#)

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

1

Title

Lot 1 - Route Specific Marketing

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

20 June 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 1

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

First Essex Buses Limited

Westway

Chelmsford

CM1 3AR

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKH3 - Essex

The contractor is an SME

No

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)

Total value of the contract/lot: £97,000

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

3

Title

Lot 3 - Better Information

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

20 June 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 2

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

First Essex Buses Limited

Westway

Chelmsford

CM1 3AR

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKH3 - Essex

The contractor is an SME

No

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)

Total value of the contract/lot: £160,000

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

2

Title

Lot 2 - Digital Only Promotion

A contract/lot is awarded: No

V.1) Information on non-award

The contract/lot is not awarded

Other reasons (discontinuation of procedure)

Section V. Award of contract

Lot No

4

Title

Lot 4 - Increased Frequency

A contract/lot is awarded: No

V.1) Information on non-award

The contract/lot is not awarded

Other reasons (discontinuation of procedure)

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

The High Court

The Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand

London

WC2A 2LL

Country

United Kingdom