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Tender

Internal Audit Specialists Framework

Essex County Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-062709

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05a92c

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Scope

Reference

E005PA

Description

The scope of this requirement is to create a Framework of Internal Audit Specialists to support ECC's existing Internal Audit function in providing independent, objective assurance and consulting services for the council.

It is proposed that the Framework would be procured on terms which would allow access for Unitary, City, Borough and District Councils. These Contracting Bodies will be responsible for ordering of, and payment for, their own services through this agreement.

The Framework will be split into the following Lots.

Lot 1 - Contract Audits

Lot 2 - Project and Programme Audits

Lot 3 - Technology Specialists

Lot 4 - General Audits

Bidders can bid for any Lot or all Lots if they can meet the requirements.

Successful bidders will be placed on a ranking list which will be based on the total score awarded following the evaluation of bids received (Please refer to the Bidder Guidance for details on the evaluation process).

The requirements will be met through a capability assessment process, as and when a new requirement is identified the capability assessment will be issued to the top ranked bidder in the specific Lot under which the requirement sits. Where that bidder is unable to meet the requirement, the next ranked bidder will be issued the capability assessment and so on until a bidder is chosen.

Any Contracting Body using this Framework shall abide by the same process for fulfilling their requirements.

The initial term of the Framework is three (3) years with an option to extend for a further period of 12 months.

The government's English Devolution White Paper, Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth, published on 16 December 2024, states that the government wants all remaining two-tier areas in England to be eventually restructured into single-tier unitary authorities and is termed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This reorganisation is part of a broader devolution strategy to simplify local government structures, save public funds, and improve local accountability. LGR will impact the County of Essex as it currently operates a two-tier Local Government structure.

It is anticipated, that during the life of this framework, the LGR process will commence and/or progress potentially impacting this framework. Impacts may include, but are not limited to, modifications such as a transfer of the legal entity you currently contract with, significant increases and/or decreases in the services required due to the change in size/scope of the Contracting Authority, and/or changes to the scope of the nature of services required. Although any contract scope changes should broadly relate to the nature of the existing scope, new services of a related nature may be required that were not previously included.

The scale and exact timing of the changes are unknown at this point, but it is known that LGR will impact the County of Essex. All suppliers who work with the Authority need to be aware and where possible, work with the Authority to adapt to any changes/modifications as required to ensure smooth transition and continuity of services.

Commercial tool

Establishes a framework

Total value (estimated)

- £475,000 excluding VAT
- £570,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 5 December 2025 to 4 December 2028
- Possible extension to 4 December 2029
- 4 years

Description of possible extension:

The decision to extend the Agreement with is at the sole discretion of Essex County Council and any subsequent authority depending on audit requirements

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 79212200 - Internal audit services

Contract locations

- UKH3 - Essex

Lot constraints

Description of how multiple lots may be awarded:

Bidders can bid for any Lot or all Lots if they can meet the requirements.

Lot 1. Contract Audits

Description

These audits scrutinise third-party contracts and procurement activities to ensure value for money, compliance with terms, and effective contract management. They may include supplier performance reviews, contract lifecycle assessments, and post-award evaluations.

Recommended Qualifications:

- CIPS (Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) qualification.
- Legal or commercial contract management certification.
- Internal audit qualification with procurement audit experience.

Expertise:

- Deep understanding of contract lifecycle, procurement regulations, and supplier performance.

- Experience in post-award audits, value-for-money assessments, and compliance reviews.
- Ability to identify risks and inefficiencies in third-party arrangements.

Lot value (estimated)

- £118,750 excluding VAT
- £142,500 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 2. Project and Programme Audits

Description

These audits evaluate the effectiveness of project and programme management practices. They assess delivery against objectives, budget control, governance structures, risk management, and benefits realisation. Suitable for capital programmes, transformation initiatives, and strategic projects.

Recommended Qualifications:

- PRINCE2 Practitioner or MSP (Managing Successful Programmes).
- APM PMQ or equivalent project management qualification.
- Internal audit qualification (CIA, CMIIA) with project audit experience.

Expertise:

- Experience auditing large-scale programmes and transformation initiatives.
- Understanding of project governance, risk management, and benefits realisation.
- Ability to assess delivery against objectives, timelines, and budgets.

Lot value (estimated)

- £118,750 excluding VAT
- £142,500 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 3. Technology Specialist Audits

Description

Focused on IT systems, digital services, cybersecurity, data governance, and infrastructure. These audits require specialist knowledge to assess risks related to system integrity, data protection, and technology resilience. They may include penetration testing, system configuration reviews, and IT project assurance.

Recommended Qualifications:

- Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA).
- ISO 27001 Lead Auditor or equivalent.
- Cyber Essentials or similar accreditation.

Expertise:

- Proficiency in IT risk assessment, cybersecurity, and data governance.
- Experience with auditing cloud platforms, infrastructure, and digital services.
- Knowledge of public sector IT compliance and digital transformation.

Lot value (estimated)

- £118,750 excluding VAT
- £142,500 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 4. General Audits

Description

These audits cover broad assurance activities across ECC's operations, including governance, risk management, and internal controls. They assess compliance with policies, procedures, and regulations, and provide recommendations for improvement. Typical areas may include Finance, HR, and operational processes.

Recommended Qualifications:

- Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIA) qualification or equivalent.
- ACCA, CIPFA, or ICAEW membership with internal audit experience.

- Demonstrable experience in public sector internal auditing.

Expertise:

- Strong understanding of governance, risk, and control frameworks.
- Experience auditing core business functions (e.g., finance, HR, procurement).
- Ability to produce clear, evidence-based audit reports and recommendations.

Lot value (estimated)

- £118,750 excluding VAT
- £142,500 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Framework

Maximum number of suppliers

Unlimited

Maximum percentage fee charged to suppliers

0%

Framework operation description

Bidders are required to complete and submit a full Pricing Matrix demonstrating their costs associated with delivering the requirement as set out in the Pricing Matrix. This consists of a scenario based on an assignment and the overall cost of that assignment will be used to evaluate Price.

Bidders will also be required to complete a rate card, the rate(s) provided will then be the maximum rate chargeable during the lifetime of the framework.

Successful bidders will be placed on a ranking list which will be based on the total score awarded following the evaluation of bids received (Please refer to the Bidder Guidance for details on the evaluation process).

The requirements will be met through a capability assessment process, as and when a new requirement is identified the capability assessment will be issued to the top ranked bidder in the specific Lot under which the requirement sits. Where that bidder is unable to meet the requirement, the next ranked bidder will be issued the capability assessment and so on until a bidder is chosen.

The capability assessment will focus on completing the work within a given timescale and budget.

Award method when using the framework

Without competition

Contracting authorities that may use the framework

The following Borough, City, District and Unitary authorities in Essex.

Basildon

Braintree

Brentwood

Castle Point

Chelmsford

Colchester

Epping Forest

Harlow

Maldon

Rochford

Tendring

Uttlesford

Thurrock

Southend on Sea

Contracting authority location restrictions

- UKH3 - Essex

Participation

Particular suitability

Lot 1. Contract Audits

Lot 2. Project and Programme Audits

Lot 3. Technology Specialist Audits

Lot 4. General Audits

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

21 October 2025, 5:00pm

Tender submission deadline

6 November 2025, 4:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

Your ITT (including PSQ) submission must be submitted to the Authority electronically by publishing through this ITT (including PSQ) DN789700 E005PA Internal Audit Specialist Framework at <https://procontract.due-north.com/Login>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

20 November 2025

Award criteria

Name	Type	Weighting
Quality	Quality	70%
Price	Price	30%

Other information

Applicable trade agreements

- Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Open procedure

Justification for not publishing a preliminary market engagement notice

Early engagement notice published September 2024 on Contracts Finder to explore opportunities to develop how it can

meet its requirements for Contract and Procurement Specialist Auditor work.

Documents

Associated tender documents

[E005PA IASF Specification V1.0.docx](#)

[E005PA IASF Bidder Guidance V1.0.docx](#)

[E005PA IASF PSQ.docx](#)

[E005PA PA23 Assessment Matrix V1.0.xlsx](#)

Contracting authority

Essex County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PWVM-4844-NRQH

County Hall, Market Road

Chelmsford

CM1 1QH

United Kingdom

Email: andrew.beaver@essex.gov.uk

Region: UKH36 - Heart of Essex

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government