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Tender

The Appointment of a Managing Agent for Sunderland City Council Business Centres

Sunderland City Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-063497

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-059e7b ([view related notices](#))

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Scope

Description

This procurement description outlines the context and requirements for Sunderland City Council ("the Council") for the appointment of a Managing Agent to provide a range of key services at the Council's Business Centres ("the Centres") namely, Evolve Business Centre, Sunderland Software Centre, and Washington Business Centre.

The Council previously procured the construction and delivery of the Centres over the period from 2006 to 2014 (drawing on resources secured through the European Regional Development Fund ("ERDF") alongside the Council's own resources) to support the economic development of the city, creating facilities for businesses to start up and grow within the city.

All of the Centres have been managed throughout their lifetime directly by the Council and together, as at end July 2025, are home to 75 businesses, collectively employing a total of 363 people.

It is now considered that external expertise is required from a Managing Agent to provide a combination of strategic and operational leadership and management services to work alongside the Council in order to drive optimum performance from the Centres, both in

terms of securing operational efficiencies and maximising economic impact (considered to be the dual objectives).

It is proposed that the Managing Agent would be required to deliver the following core services on behalf of the Council as the owner of the Centres:

- Strategic management of the Centres including targeted improvement of operational practices - with responsibility for procuring and appointing all contractors and with day-to-day supervision of the Council's retained staff operations.
- Marketing and letting of vacant spaces.
- Integrated culture of business development / support to stimulate business growth and expansion.
- ICT Managed Service Provision available to businesses on an opt in / opt out basis and
- Delivery of repairs and maintenance.

Total value (estimated)

- £5,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031
- Possible extension to 31 March 2036
- 10 years

Description of possible extension:

The Council is anticipating entering into a contract with the Managing Agent for an initial term of five years, with the option to extend the contract (at the Council's absolute discretion) for a further period or periods up to five years.

Options

The right to additional purchases while the contract is valid.

The Council at its discretion, may consider the inclusion of additional requirements over the duration of the agreement with the Managing Agent, including the potential provision of additional management services in relation to the Centres and/or the potential incorporation into the contract at a future date of other properties owned by the Council and/or its subsidiary companies.

Main procurement category

Services

Additional procurement category

Works

CPV classifications

- 48200000 - Networking, Internet and intranet software package
- 50300000 - Repair, maintenance and associated services related to personal computers, office equipment, telecommunications and audio-visual equipment
- 50700000 - Repair and maintenance services of building installations
- 70300000 - Real estate agency services on a fee or contract basis
- 72000000 - IT services: consulting, software development, Internet and support
- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

Contract locations

- UKC23 - Sunderland

Participation

Legal and financial capacity conditions of participation

Legal and financial conditions of participation are included in this procurement. Full information regarding the legal and financial conditions of participation can be found in the associated Procurement Documents.

Technical ability conditions of participation

Technical ability conditions of participation are included in this procurement. Full information regarding the technical ability conditions of participation can be found in the associated Procurement Documents.

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Enquiry deadline

31 October 2025, 12:00pm

Submission type

Requests to participate

Deadline for requests to participate

7 November 2025, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

The opportunity can be accessed via the NEPO eTender system, Open. Suppliers wishing to be considered to be subsequently invited to tender for this Contract must register their expression of interest and submit the Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) through the Open eTendering System. If not already registered, suppliers should register on the NEPO eTendering System at <https://www.open-uk.org/>

The PSQ responses must be submitted using the link above. Responses submitted via postal or email methods will not be accepted.

If you need technical assistance from the Open Support team, this can be requested via open.support@nepo.org

PLEASE NOTE: Open is accessible 24/7 however, technical support is available Monday - Thursday 8:30 - 5pm and Friday 8.30 - 4.30pm

For guidance on how to submit your response through Open, please visit: <https://www.openhub.org/training> (<https://www.open-hub.org/training>) (<https://www.open-hub.org/training> (<https://www.openhub.org/training>)) to access the available Training Guides.

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

1 March 2026

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Quality (including social value)	Criteria will be refined later (see Competitive flexible procedure description)	Quality	75%
Pricing	Criteria will be refined later (see Competitive flexible procedure description).	Price	25%

Other information

Applicable trade agreements

- Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)
- Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Competitive flexible procedure

Competitive flexible procedure description

This is a tender notice for the award of a public contract pursuant to a multi-stage competitive tendering procedure ("Competitive Flexible Procedure") in accordance with section 20(1) and (2)(b) of the Procurement Act 2023 ('the Act').

Suppliers' attention is drawn to the instructions set out in the Procurement Documents, which describe the multi-stage procurement process to be undertaken and set out the requirements which apply to all Suppliers participating in the procurement process. Suppliers should review the Procurement Documents, including the instructions and any supporting information carefully before submitting a PSQ and, if then shortlisted, a subsequent Tender during the next stage of the process, as failure to comply may lead to your PSQ and/or Tender (as applicable) being excluded.

The Procurement process

The Contracting Authority intends to follow the process set out below in this Procurement:

Stage 1 - Invitation to Participate within the Procurement Specific Questionnaire and the Conditions of Participation

The first stage of this Competitive Flexible Procedure entails the submission of a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) which can be accessed in the Procurement Documents.

The evaluation criteria and methodology which will be applied to assess the PSQ submission is set out in the Procurement Documentation accessed by the NEPO eTender system, Open.

The PSQ Scoring guidance clearly sets out which sections are scored on a 'Pass / Fail' basis to identify where Suppliers can be automatically removed from the process.

PSQ/Conditions of Participation Shortlisting Stage

Conditions of Participation are designed to assess the Suppliers' legal and financial capacity and/or technical ability to perform the proposed contract. This includes a pass or fail mechanism, and/or a threshold which the Supplier must meet as part of a selection process to limit the number of participating Suppliers. This enables the Contracting Authority to determine which Suppliers will be shortlisted to proceed to the ITT stage of the process. Suppliers must register on the Central Digital Platform, ensure their information is up to date on the system and provide the Authority with the information requested in that system. Suppliers who do not complete all of the required questions in the PSQ will be automatically disqualified.

Further details regarding the Conditions of Participation and how these will be evaluated by the Contracting Authority can be found in the Procurement Documents.

Following the evaluation of the Conditions of Participation and the assessment of PSQ to ensure no Suppliers are deemed to be excluded or excludable (and the Contracting Authority considers that the circumstances giving rise to the application of an exclusion ground is not continuing or is not likely to occur again). Subject to the instructions as stipulated within the Procurement Documents, the anticipated number of shortlisted bidders for the subsequent Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage will be a minimum of three (3) (subject to the receipt of a sufficient number of compliant responses) and up to a maximum of five (5) (the exact number of shortlisted bidders is to be determined by the Council at its absolute discretion), of the highest scoring compliant PSQ responses to be invited to the next stage of the procurement process - Stage 2 - Invitation to Tender stage ("ITT"). Notification information will be issued to all successful and unsuccessful Suppliers of the outcome of this first stage.

In order to successfully satisfy the Conditions of Participation on this procurement, Suppliers must:

- Provide all requested information.
- Meet all mandatory requirements pass/fail questions.
- Respond to all discretionary requirements.
- Pass the assessed elements in Section 3: Selection Questions - Financial Capacity and Technical Ability.

Due to the number of Suppliers to be selected for the subsequent ITT stage, in the event that any of the shortlisted Suppliers subsequently withdraw from the ITT stage, the Contracting Authority reserves the right at its sole discretion to invite to participate in, and admit to the ITT stage (in descending order) the next highest scoring candidate who has

passed all of the Pass/ Fail requirements of the Conditions of Participation and PSQ.

In the event that a Supplier is subsequently admitted to the ITT stage pursuant to the paragraph above, the other Suppliers involved in the ITT stage will be notified in writing for information purposes only.

Stage Two: Invitation to Tender Stage ("ITT")

At this stage, the Contracting Authority will issue an Invitation to Tender ("ITT") to the shortlisted bidders that sets out the requirements for the preparation and submission of full and detailed final Tender submissions which contain all elements required for the performance of the Contract and meet all of the Contracting Authority's requirements.

This stage may include individual pre-tender clarification meetings with shortlisted bidders on any element of the procurement prior to the submission of the Tenders. Tenders are expected to be final and shall be capable of acceptance by the Contracting Authority. However, the Contracting Authority may request Suppliers to clarify, specify or optimise their Tenders. Such clarification, specification or optimisation, or any additional information, may not involve changes to the essential aspects of the Tender or the requirements of the Procurement, where such variations are likely to distort the competition or give the Supplier an unfair advantage.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to seek further information pursuant to the Act in order to determine whether the Contracting Authority considers a Tender to be abnormally low for the performance of the Contract.

Following submission of Tenders, the Contracting Authority expects to undertake an evaluation process to identify which Supplier has submitted the Most Advantageous Tender in accordance with the process and evaluation criteria as set out in the Procurement Documents.

In the event that none of the Tenders received during the ITT stage meet the minimum requirements of the Contracting Authority (as to be defined and specified in the Procurement Documents) ("the Minimum Requirements"), the Authority reserves the right (at its absolute discretion) to subsequently elect to negotiate with any individual tenderer(s) who previously submitted a Tender that did not meet the Minimum Requirements. The purpose of any such negotiation will be to seek to amend, refine and/or enhance the relevant Tender so that it may meet the Minimum Requirements, and prior to the issue by the Authority to the relevant tenderer(s) of a subsequent invitation to submit a revised final Tender for evaluation in accordance with the evaluation criteria as set out in the Procurement Documents. As part of this stage, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to make changes to the Procurement Documents, including the Authority's requirements, other than the Minimum Requirements.

Important Notice: the Contracting Authority reserves the right to vary the procedure and timeframes of the Procurement as set out in UK4 Tender Notice and any associated procurement instructions and supporting information. Reasons for this may include, but are not limited to, supporting continued competition, avoiding unnecessary bidding cost and adhering to subsequent technical or legal guidance.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right not to award any contract in connection with the opportunity as described in this Tender Notice. The Contracting Authority also reserves the right to cancel or amend the procurement process and does not bind itself to accept any Tender. The Contracting Authority shall not be liable under any circumstances for any costs or expenses incurred by any bidder or prospective bidder in responding to this Tender Notice or in taking part in the procurement process.

Organisations should note that the estimated total value of the contract set out in this Notice represents the Contracting Authority's current best assessment of the potential value of the contract over its potential maximum ten year term (including options to extend). However, the total value will depend on various factors, including the tender outcome, market conditions, the Contracting Authority's final needs, requirements and scope and the final contract term.

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://www.open-uk.org/>

The opportunity can be accessed via the NEPO eTender system, Open. Suppliers wishing to be considered for this Contract must register their expression of interest and submit the PSQ through the Open eTendering System. If not already registered, suppliers should register on the NEPO eTendering System at <https://www.open-uk.org/>

PSQ responses must be submitted using the link above. Responses submitted via postal or email methods will not be accepted.

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open.support@nepo.org

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to vary, amend, update and supplement any aspect of the associated tender documents and final details and versions of the associated tender documents will be provided via the Open eTender system to those suppliers who are successful in being selected to participate in the subsequent tender stage of the procurement process.

Contracting authority

Sunderland City Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLVZ-4154-GGRZ

City Hall, Plater Way,

Sunderland

SR1 3AA

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@sunderland.gov.uk

Region: UKC23 - Sunderland

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government