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Planning

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority New Diesel Bus Fleet Procurement Market Engagement

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-071347

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05db13

Published 5 November 2025, 3:47pm

Changes to notice

This notice has been edited. The [previous version](#) is still available.

Scope

Reference

DN796562

Description

Over 400,000 bus journeys are made daily in the Liverpool City Region, representing over 80% of the public transport journeys taken across the Combined Authority area. Across the region, bus journeys are used to connect people to work, to schools, universities and colleges and to the shops and leisure activities. The bus network therefore forms a key part of the region's infrastructure.

In 2023 the Combined Authority undertook a bus franchising business case assessment in line with the Government Bus Back Better publication, which required regions to consider whether an Enhanced Partnership or a Franchising approach would best deliver bus services for the region. Having undertaken the assessment in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Transport Act and the Franchising Guidance, LCRCA concluded that, on balance, the strategic advantages of franchising outweighed the financial risk, reaching the conclusion that bus franchising should be adopted by the Combined Authority. Following this, a major public consultation was held, which supported the franchising vision and in October 2023 the Mayor announced that bus services in the region will be franchised. To ensure a smooth transition, franchising will be introduced in phases, with the first phase commencing in September 2026, with the whole of the Liverpool City Region due to be franchised by the end of 2028.

In order to support the transition to franchising, the Combined Authority has taken the decision to procure the required bus fleets itself, such that any bidder selected to operate the franchised lots will have access to use the region's fleet, thus removing a significant incumbent advantage.

LCRCA are seeking to obtain a number of vehicles that will be capable of providing passenger services on certain routes in the region where space constraints place limitations on the size of the vehicles in operation. LCRCA is seeking to engage with organisations known to be manufacturers of passenger transport vehicles to understand the timescales and availability of short wheelbase diesel vehicles capable of transporting a minimum of 22 passengers. It is our current assumption that we could seek to procure the vehicles required for June 2026. However, it should be noted that this market engagement is exploratory, and LCRCA is not committed to purchasing diesel vehicles.

Therefore, we have developed this document to facilitate meaningful discussion to inform both ourselves, as the procuring authority, of the solutions available and to inform manufacturers of the opportunity to support bus franchising in the Liverpool City Region.

Market Engagement Process and Output

As part of this market engagement process we have provided you with this document in advance to consider your responses to the questions noted below and to allow you to consider any further clarifications on the process which you would like to raise.

The general theme of the responses from the market engagement will be used to inform our procurement strategy and requirements to be included in formal bidding documents to be issued by LCRCA at a later date.

Market Engagement Objectives

The objective of this market sounding exercise is to:

Better understand the manufacturing availability from the market which can deliver LCRCA's requirements in the timescales required by LCRCA and ensure Value for Money (VFM) is achieved in respect of the procurement of new diesel buses

To inform the current diesel bus procurement strategy being developed by LCRCA for the soon to be franchised bus network

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Total value (estimated)

- £0 excluding VAT
- £0 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 June 2026 to 2 June 2026
- 2 days

Main procurement category

Goods

CPV classifications

- 34121000 - Buses and coaches

Contract locations

- UKD72 - Liverpool

Engagement

Engagement deadline

19 November 2025

Engagement process description

To view the market engagement questionnaire and be able to respond to this market engagement. Please visit:

<https://procontract.due-north.com> if you are already registered and you will be able to search for the tender opportunity via the project name or the DN reference number.DN796562

Or if you need to register please visit:

<https://procontract.duenorth.com/SupplierRegistration/Register>

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

1 December 2025

Contracting authority

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PNDZ-8253-CJJM

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Region: UKD72 - Liverpool

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

