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Tender

Heat network techno-economic feasibility study for Culham

South Oxfordshire District Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-074444

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05945d ([view related notices](#))

Published 17 November 2025, 2:57pm

Scope

Reference

C000299

Description

Culham has been designated as the first AI Growth Zone by the UK Government. As part of this, a 100MW data centre is being developed on Culham Campus, with aspirations for up to 500MW of data centres in the longer term. There may also be a further data centre proposed for the adjacent No. 1 site which is allocated for employment use. There is an opportunity to recycle waste heat from large computer systems storing internal data to supply heating for the local community, supplying heat to multiple buildings from a central source. The National Zoning Model does not yet identify this area as a potential heat network zone as the waste heat sources do not yet exist.

The timescales for completion of the data centre are uncertain and subject to planning permission, however it is likely to be within the next five years, with an ambitious completion date suggested to be April 2028. Therefore, the council urgently needs to better understand how to capture the opportunities for low carbon heat networks arising

from these developments.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (adopted December 2020) has allocated:

- land adjacent to Culham Campus for construction of 3,500 new homes - this development is a potential end user of the heat network.
- A net increase of at least 7.3 hectares of employment land at/adjacent to Culham Campus - this may be a heat supplier or end user depending on the types of commercial development which come forward.

A Local Development Order is being developed for the site.

A previous heat mapping and energy masterplanning study for Culham was developed in 2017. This proposed three different potential heat network technologies for the site:

- gas engine CHP with supplementary backup gas boilers;
- centralised biomass boilers with supplementary backup gas boilers;
- water source heat pump in River Thames with supplementary backup gas boilers.

While the modelling and information in this study remains useful as background information, there have since been significant technological advances and changes to planned development for the site which means that this work would need to be revisited and updated as part of the techno-economic feasibility study.

At this stage, the council has not committed to taking forward beyond the techno-economic feasibility study stage. Restrictions associated with local government reorganisation (LGR) will limit this council's ability to progress this project beyond the feasibility stage. However, the feasibility study will put the project in the best possible position for a third party or the successor authority, once established, to decide to progress the scheme.

Furthermore, the planning applications for data centres and other nearby development are highly likely to be submitted before LGR is complete in 2028. Therefore, information is needed now so that South Oxfordshire District Council can consider whether planning powers could be utilised to require developments to be designed and constructed to supply or connect to a future heat network, including through the forthcoming Culham Local Development Order.

The Council is seeking a single supplier to provide these consultancy services.

Total value (estimated)

- £88,000 excluding VAT
- £105,600 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 2 March 2026 to 30 June 2026
- 3 months, 30 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 71313000 - Environmental engineering consultancy services
- 71314300 - Energy-efficiency consultancy services
- 71314310 - Heating engineering services for buildings

Contract locations

- UKJ14 - Oxfordshire

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

15 December 2025, 5:00pm

Tender submission deadline

5 January 2026, 5:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

<https://procontract.due-north.com/ProjectManagement/ProjectDashboard?projectId=1abfc b19-c1c3-f011-813a-005056b64545>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Award criteria

Please refer to the suite of tender documents

Procedure

Procedure type

Below threshold - open competition

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://procontract.due-north.com/ProjectManagement/ProjectDashboard?projectId=1abfcb19-c1c3-f011-813a-005056b64545>

This tender opportunity is advertised on Proactis portal accessed by the above link

Contracting authority

South Oxfordshire District Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PRWZ-2743-VQTG

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Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government