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Planning

Lakeside North Harbour - Shuttle Bus Service

Portsmouth City Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-074573

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0523bb ([view related notices](#))

Published 18 November 2025, 12:05am

Scope

Reference

P00005083

Description

Portsmouth City Council (the 'council') will be re-tendering its shuttle bus service for Lakeside North Harbour in the coming months. Prior to undertaking the formal procurement process the Council is seeking input from operators on a number of key considerations which will inform the adopted strategy.

The Council requires a high-quality private transport service linking local transport points at Hilsea/Cosham and Southsea Hover Terminal to the Lakeside North Harbour Business Park.

There are agreed stops at each location, and the service is provided for Lakeside business park occupiers and staff only. The service links up drop off points from public transport close to Lakeside North Harbour and plays a significant role in addressing issues of traffic congestion, air quality and carbon emissions in Portsmouth and Southeast

Hampshire.

Following completion of this Preliminary Market Engagement process, the Council is targeting to commence a formal procurement process following the Open Procedure via issue of a Tender Notice on 19th January 2026 with contract award to the successful Operator targeted for 30th March 2026.

The contract is targeted for commencement on 30th November 2026. The Council will give the successful Operator a minimum of 6 months' notice to make appropriate arrangements to ensure seamless service is maintained.

The Council envisages that the contract will run for an initial base term duration of 7 years, subsequently extendable in increments to be agreed to a maximum total term of 15 years.

However, the Council is considering base term options which may include for longer period to allow for economic depreciation of bus assets and will be seeking feedback from the market in relation to this specific consideration as part of the pre-procurement engagement process.

The Operator shall be responsible for full compliance with all appropriate service vehicle, operator and driver licensing regulations. In addition, the service shall be registered with the Traffic Commissioners if it is to be operated as a local bus service. The Operator shall be responsible for registering routes with the Traffic Commissioners if required.

The Shuttle Bus Service Park shall be provided in accordance with the requirements set out within the Council's specification. The Council has made a draft copy of the specification and associated service documentation available via it's e-sourcing system Intend.

The core objectives that the Operator will be required to work in partnership with the Council to achieve are to:

- Provide a high-quality Shuttle Bus service that Lakeside occupiers and staff will want to use.
- Raise the profile and image of the Lakeside shuttle bus service in Portsmouth and remove practical and perceptual barriers to bus use.
- Increase the market share of the shuttle bus services.
- Provide a reliable and punctual shuttle bus service.
- Improve integration between transport modes.

- Contribute towards reducing traffic congestion in Portsmouth.
- Contribute towards reducing the amount of carbon emissions produced by transport in Portsmouth.
- Reduce the number of car trips into Lakeside North Harbour and achieve modal shift from private to public transport.

The Council will install and or provide:

- Suitable bus stops at Lakeside North Harbour and agree permissions for stops in the local area required by the bus route.
- Manage bus timetable which is distributed to the users of the service by Lakeside North Harbour.
- Provide parking spaces to store contracted bus provision outside of service hours.

The contract is currently valued in the region of £226,000 per annum. This value excludes the approximately 400 litres of fuel required for the 5 days the bus is operational which is purchased at cost.

The Council is keen to investigate a number of options in respect of service coverage, financial and environmental objectives. In order to investigate these options and enable the Council to arrive at a fully informed market tested decision the Council is considering inviting tender submissions against a range of Lots.

If a lotting strategy is adopted, tenderers will be given the option of tendering for one, all or any combination of lots. The options which the Council is currently considering are:

- Lot 1 - Dedicated, fully liveried service - Minimum Euro 6 vehicles
- Lot 2 - Dedicated fully liveried Service - Fully Electric Vehicles
- Lot 3 - Part-dedicated Service with removal decals - Min Euro 6 Vehicles
- Lot 4 - Part-dedicated Service with removal decals - Fully Electric Vehicles

The Council would ideally wish to award on the basis of livery, electric vehicles and resourced fully dedicated service but appreciates that it may have to compromise on its ideal position due to affordability.

The PME process and subsequent procurement process will be undertaken in line with the following indicative programme:

PME and RFI documents issued - 17th November 2025

RFI documents return deadline - 5th December 2025 @12:00

Procurement documents available on In-tend - 19th January 2026

Deadline for requests for clarification - 13th February 2026 @23:59

Tender return deadline - 23rd February 2026 @12:00

Award decision notified to tenderers - 16th March 2026

Standstill period starts - 17th March 2026

Standstill period ends - 27th March 2026

Contract award - 30th March 2026

Mobilisation - 30th March 2026 - 30th November 2026

Contract Commencement - 30th November 2026

Total value (estimated)

- £4,186,391 excluding VAT
- £5,232,988 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 30 November 2026 to 29 November 2033
- Possible extension to 29 November 2041
- 15 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 60172000 - Hire of buses and coaches with driver

Contract locations

- UKJ31 - Portsmouth

Engagement

Engagement deadline

5 December 2025

Engagement process description

In undertaking this preliminary market engagement process the Council is seeking to gain feedback against a number of key considerations which will inform its subsequent adopted strategy. These considerations include for:

- Vehicle specification and Environmental Compliance
- Electric Vehicle options
- Service Commencement and Phasing
- Providing a dedicated vs non-dedicated service
- Contract duration

- Branding and Marketing
- Service Schedule and Flexibility

The overall purpose of the engagement process is for the Council to obtain a better understanding of the level of interest from potential suppliers in delivering this service, gain feedback in relation to the council's requirements and proposed commercial/contractual model, receive the markets views on the procurement approach, timescales and milestones.

In order to obtain feedback the Council has developed a brief Request for Information (RFI) questionnaire for interested operators to complete and return by 5th December 2025 - 12:00.

The council may also choose to conduct one-to-one interviews with operators following the return of the questionnaires to gain further insight into the information provided. These interviews will be undertaken remotely via TEAMS between Monday 8th and Friday 12th December at mutually convenient times.

The RFI questionnaire, supporting PME Brief, draft specification and supporting documents can be accessed via the Council's e-sourcing system In-tend, which can be accessed free of charge via the following web address:

<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/portsmouthcc.aspx/Home>

The Council use the system to administrate the preliminary market engagement process and subsequent formal procurement process, including for the following activities:

- Access to and issue of preliminary market information & documentation
- Pre-RFI submission clarification requests and response
- RFI questionnaire submission
- Access to and issue of procurement information & documentation
- Pre-tender submission clarification requests and response
- Tender submission
- Tender opening & access to responses
- Post-tender submission clarification requests and response

- Award decision notification & feedback.

NB: Suppliers should note that there is no obligation to take part in this exercise and that if they do not take part, it will not preclude them from any subsequent related procurement process.

Engaging suppliers will not receive preferential treatment in any subsequent quotation or tender process, and this is in no way an indication of the selection of any organisation or a guarantee of future work.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

19 January 2026

Contracting authority

Portsmouth City Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PCNL-5714-PRZV

Civic Offices, Guildhall Square

Portsmouth

PO1 2AL

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Region: UKJ31 - Portsmouth

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government