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Tender

Merseytravel : Catering Provision On Mersey Ferries, Café & Events

Merseytravel

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

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Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05d204 ([view related notices](#))

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Scope

Description

Mersey Ferries is one of the most recognisable symbols of the Liverpool City Region - a cultural icon with over 800 years of history on the River Mersey and an internationally known brand. Today the ferries serve more than 480,000 passengers a year, connecting tourists, commuters, local families, and school groups with one of the region's most memorable visitor experiences. Operating daily sightseeing cruises, essential commuter services, and seasonal themed journeys, the ferries offer unrivalled views of Liverpool's waterfront and play a major role in the city's cultural and tourism landscape. With the introduction of a new vessel, the Royal Daffodil, in 2026 operating alongside the much-loved Snowdrop (Dazzle), Mersey Ferries is entering a period of renewal - and is seeking food and beverage partners who can match this ambition with creativity, professionalism, and a passion for hospitality.

The tender is structured across three lots, covering onboard catering, shoreside operations, and special event catering. Bidders may apply for one, two, or all three of these LOTS detailed.

Total value (estimated)

- £1,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031
- Possible extension to 31 March 2033
- 7 years

Description of possible extension:

A 2 year optional extension is available.

Main procurement category

Services

Contract locations

- UKD72 - Liverpool

Lot constraints

Maximum number of lots a supplier can bid for: 2

Maximum number of lots a supplier can be awarded: 2

Not the same for all lots

CPV classifications are shown in Lot sections, because they are not the same for all lots.

Lot 1A (was 1). On Board Café & Bar (Main Ferry Services)

Description

An onboard café and bar operation on our ferries - serving hot drinks, snacks, light meals, and alcoholic beverages, for daytime cruises and our evening scheduled cruises covering both the Snowdrop (capacity for 350) passengers and the new vessel (with capacity for up to 480 passengers).

Mersey Ferries currently operate 14 commuter services on weekday mornings, starting at 7:20 am from Seacombe and 11 commuter services on weekday evenings finishing at 6:40pm at Gerry Marsden. We do not operate the commuter service at weekends, bank holidays or during the Christmas holidays.

There are 7 River Explorer Cruises scheduled daily and we operate 9 River Explorer Cruises on Bank Holidays (except Christmas)

Mersey Ferries also currently operate a number of scheduled cruises that fall within this lot; the programme runs from April to October and is currently 8 Manchester Ship Canal (Premium) 34 Summer Evening Cruises, and 10 Liverpool Bay Cruises. Live entertainment as part of these cruise offers is provided by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

A comprehensive list of kitchen equipment is included in the appendices along with the vessel layout. Should, suppliers find that the provided equipment does not meet their requirements, negotiations regarding supplementation or exchange may be considered.

Utilities are not applicable for this lot.

Lot value (estimated)

- £325,000 excluding VAT
- £390,000 including VAT

CPV classifications

- 24322500 - Alcohol
- 55300000 - Restaurant and food-serving services
- 55400000 - Beverage-serving services
- 55500000 - Canteen and catering services

Same for all lots

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

Lot 1B. Seacombe Terminal Café (Shore-Based Operation)**Description**

A shore side café in the busy and newly refurbished Seacombe, Wirral terminal - with potential to serve both ferry passengers and local residents, commuters, and visitors. The café also serves as the main food and beverage offer for visitors of Eureka Science and Discovery Museum, attracting a footfall of £100k per annum.

Seacombe Terminal current operating times are Monday to Friday 7am to 7pm , weekend and bank holiday times vary on seasonality, but broadly 9:30am to 4:30pm during low season October to April and 9:30am to 6:30pm during the summer cruise season. Provision to extend these opening times can be discussed to support summer evening cruises. 24/7 access can be arranged if required for food preparation via separate access.

Kitchen equipment provision for the Seacombe Café can be negotiated.

Utilities for the Seacombe Café for 24/25; Electricity £11k, Water £1k and Gas £3.5k for Kitchen use only.

Please note that the occupier of the premises is liable for associated business rates, we recommend that suppliers make independent enquiry with Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and Wirral Council.

How your Business Rates bill is calculated | wirral.gov.uk

Lot value (estimated)

- £375,000 excluding VAT
- £450,000 including VAT

CPV classifications

- 55300000 - Restaurant and food-serving services
- 55400000 - Beverage-serving services
- 55500000 - Canteen and catering services

Same for all lots

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

Lot 2. On Board Events Management & Catering

Description

A flexible, creative catering offer for our special pop-up cruises and events, private charter

hires, and themed events - where food, drink and atmosphere help turn journeys into unforgettable experiences.

Mersey Ferries are looking for a partner to help design event packages for private boat and VIP area reservations, with options tailored to client needs or tiered packages. This applies to both the heritage and new vessels.

The Provider must hold all necessary licenses and permits to operate, including (where applicable): Food business registration, Alcohol license (Premises and Personal Licence Holder) Public Performance or Entertainment Licence (for music or events) Health & Safety certification.

Utilities are not applicable for this lot.

Lot value (estimated)

- £300,000 excluding VAT
- £360,000 including VAT

CPV classifications

- 55300000 - Restaurant and food-serving services
- 55400000 - Beverage-serving services
- 55500000 - Canteen and catering services
- 79952000 - Event services

Same for all lots

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

Participation

Legal and financial capacity conditions of participation

Lot 1A (was 1). On Board Café & Bar (Main Ferry Services)

Lot 1B. Seacombe Terminal Café (Shore-Based Operation)

Lot 2. On Board Events Management & Catering

Financial Standing

State your annual turnover for the last financial year- we are expecting turnover of £200k or over:

Provide confirm you have audited accounts (Yes/No):

Do you have any outstanding tax liabilities (Pass/Fail):

Technical ability conditions of participation

Lot 1A (was 1). On Board Café & Bar (Main Ferry Services)

Lot 1B. Seacombe Terminal Café (Shore-Based Operation)

Lot 2. On Board Events Management & Catering

Give a summary of your experience delivering catering and hospitality:

How many years' experience in catering and hospitality do you have:

Particular suitability

Lot 1A (was 1). On Board Café & Bar (Main Ferry Services)

Lot 1B. Seacombe Terminal Café (Shore-Based Operation)

Lot 2. On Board Events Management & Catering

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Submission type

Requests to participate

Deadline for requests to participate

12 December 2025, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

Bidders seeking to submit a response to this tender opportunity. We request that bidders please log on to their proactis tender portal website. Bidders will be able to see all 3 LOTS which are available for bidders to submit the relevant paperwork and documentation.

If you do not have a proactis account. Please follow the link below, where you will be able to register and then find the tender opportunity for you to respond to.

<https://procontract.due-north.com/SupplierRegistration/Register>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

1 March 2026

Award criteria

Name	Type	Weighting
Quality	Quality	70%
Price	Price	30%

Other information**Conflicts assessment prepared/revised**

Yes

Procedure**Procedure type**

Competitive flexible procedure

Special regime

Concession

Competitive flexible procedure description

The Contracting Authority is undertaking this procurement using a Competitive Flexible Procedure. The process will consist of the following stages:

1. Selection Stage - Pre-Selection Questionnaire (PSQ)

Interested suppliers are required to complete and submit a Pre-Selection Questionnaire (PSQ). The PSQ will be assessed in accordance with the stated pass/fail criteria and any minimum requirements.

Bidders who meet all mandatory selection requirements will be invited to participate in the next stage.

2. Invitation to Tender (ITT) Stage

All bidders who successfully pass the PSQ stage will be issued with the Invitation to Tender (ITT).

At this stage, bidders will be required to submit detailed responses to:

Quality questions, addressing the technical and service-related requirements; and

Commercial requirements, including pricing information and any supporting financial documentation.

All submissions will be evaluated in accordance with the published evaluation methodology. Following evaluation and internal moderation, the highest-scoring bidders will be shortlisted.

3. Presentation and Product Evaluation Stage

Shortlisted bidders will be invited to attend a presentation and product evaluation session.

As part of this session, bidders will be requested to provide a selection of food products chosen in advance by the project team. These products will be evaluated against a strict and pre-defined evaluation criterion, which may include quality, taste, presentation, innovation, and suitability for the required service.

Scores from the presentation and product evaluation will be combined with the ITT scores to determine the final ranking of bidders.

4. Contract Award

Following completion of all stages and final moderation, the Contracting Authority will identify the most economically advantageous tender and proceed to award the contract in line with the procurement regulations.

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://procontract.due-north.com/SupplierRegistration/Register>

Contracting authority

Merseytravel

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PJQR-8469-DXQD

1 Mann Island

Liverpool

L3 1BP

United Kingdom

Email: Procurement@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk>

Region: UKD72 - Liverpool

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government