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Planning

Mass Participation Running Event - Pre Market Engagement

Portsmouth City Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-084587

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05f99e

Published 18 December 2025, 4:12pm

Scope

Reference

P00005175

Description

Portsmouth City Council is undertaking Pre-Market Engagement (PME) for a Mass Participation Running Event to explore options for continuing a flagship sporting occasion in the city. Historically, this event has been delivered as part of the Great South Run, which is one of Europe's most popular mass participation races.

The Great South Run has been held annually in Portsmouth since 1990 and typically takes place in mid-October. It is a 10-mile (16.09 km) road race, offering an intermediate distance between a 10K and a half marathon. The event attracts thousands of runners and spectators each year, with recent editions welcoming over 20,000 participants across the main race and associated events such as the 5K, Junior, and Mini runs. The route showcases Portsmouth's iconic landmarks, including Southsea Seafront and the Historic Dockyard, making it a celebrated part of the city's sporting calendar.

The Council have published a PME Notice in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023. The Council's aim in undertaking this PME exercise is to understand the market's interest, capacity, capability, with a view to developing the procurement strategy and tender documentation to meet needs, objectives, statutory obligations and best value duties.

Through this PME, the Council aims to gauge market interest, identify innovative delivery models, and ensure the event continues to provide economic, social, and health benefits for residents and visitors alike.

Key Considerations for Future Event Delivery

As the Council explores options for a new mass participation running event, it is essential to understand the capabilities, approaches, and innovations that potential providers can bring.

The following areas outline what we aim to discuss during engagement, ensuring the event is safe, inclusive, financially sustainable, and aligned with community and environmental priorities.

1. Delivery Capability
2. Commercial Models
3. Community Engagement
4. Environmental and Sustainability Credentials
5. Marketing and Branding
6. Innovation and Added Value
7. Event Timing and Duration
8. Frequency and Format
9. Expansion Potential under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Procurement Approach Following Pre-Market Engagement

At this stage, the Council has not yet determined the exact procurement process that will follow this Pre-Market Engagement exercise. The approach will depend on market feedback, the complexity of requirements, and the level of innovation proposed by potential providers.

Possible routes include:

- An Open Tender under the Public Procurement Act 2023 (PA23),
- A Competitive Flexible Procedure (CFP) under PA23, which is similar to the former restricted procedure, or
- A more iterative process such as Competitive Dialogue, should the requirement warrant detailed solution development.

The Council will confirm the chosen procurement route in due course, by issuing a Contract Tender Notice outlining the key details and requirements, including the overview of the procurement process & associated programme, value of the opportunity, scope of the contract & associated contractual terms, minimum levels of technical experience & accreditations and evaluation & award criteria.

The notice will provide all necessary information for potential suppliers to assess and apply for the opportunity. The Council anticipates that this opportunity will be classified as an above-threshold concession under the Procurement Act 2023. This will be confirmed upon publication of the tender notice.

In readiness for issue of the tender, any interested suppliers may register on the governments Central Digital Platform, as the Council is required to review information held there for any potential grounds for exclusion and undertake a debarment check. Guidance on accessing the Central Digital Platform can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/suppliers-how-to-register-your-organisation-and-first-administrator-on-find-a-tender-in-three-easy-steps-html>

The Council are intending to run the PME and the subsequent envisaged tender process under the following Procurement Programme:

- 1.Publish Pre Market Engagement Notice- Thursday 18th December 2025
- 2.Initial 1-2-1 supplier discussion - Monday 15th December to Friday 19th December 2025
- 3.Initial 1-2-1 supplier discussions - Monday 5th January 2026 to Friday 9th January 2026
- 4.Optional follow up 1-2-1 supplier discussions - at Council discretion - Monday 19th January 2026 to Friday 23rd January 2026
- 5.Issue of FTS Notice (Tender process TBC)* - February/March 2026

6.Final Tender Submissions* - July/August 2026

7.Notification of award decision - No later than Monday 21st September 2026

8.Standstill Period - Tuesday 22nd September 2026

9. Preferred bidder secured - Friday 2nd October 2026

10.Mobilisation Start - TBC

11.Contract Start - TBC

*The procurement programme, including the stages and timescales from the issue of the tender notice through to tender return, has not yet been defined. These details will be determined following the completion of the Pre-Market Engagement exercise and will take into account market feedback, event complexity, and the most appropriate procurement route under the Public Procurement Act 2023.

The Council will ensure that all suppliers are kept informed and that the final programme is communicated in a transparent and timely manner.

The intention is to manage this procurement programme to provide the longest lead in and mobilisation period for the 2027 event as practicable.

Contract dates (estimated)

- 25 January 2027 to 24 January 2032
- 5 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 92610000 - Sports facilities operation services

- 92620000 - Sport-related services

Contract locations

- UKJ31 - Portsmouth
 - UKJ35 - South Hampshire
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Engagement

Engagement deadline

23 January 2026

Engagement process description

PME Supplier Participation Process

The Council wishes to hold one-to-one meetings with suitably experienced and interested suppliers as part of this Pre-Market Engagement exercise. These meetings will typically take place via Microsoft Teams and last approximately one hour to an hour and a half. Where practical, there will also be an option to meet in person at the Civic Offices.

In the first instance, interested suppliers should complete Mass Participation Running Event - PME 1-1 EOI form and return this via Intend correspondence expressing their interest in participating in these discussions. The expression of interest form requests suppliers to provide the following information:

- General company information
- Details of up to three previous events delivered, demonstrating relevant experience
- Availability for meetings on:
 - o Tuesday 6th January 2026

- o Wednesday 7th January 2026
- o Thursday 8th January 2026 (AM)
- o Wednesday 14th January 2026 (PM)
- o Thursday 15th January 2026

- Names of delegates who will attend, including their role and email address.

Should a request for an alternative date be made, the Council will review the request but cannot commit to accommodating this at this stage. The Council will review all submissions and, where relevant experience has been demonstrated, will look to arrange meetings accordingly.

At the Council's discretion, we may look to engage further with suppliers who attend an initial one-to-one meeting. These follow-up sessions would take place between Monday 19th January 2026 and Friday 23rd January 2026 and will be used to gather additional information or review specific aspects of the supplier's previous delivery of similar events.

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 tender process, and this is in no way an indication of the selection of any organisation or a guarantee of future work.

SMT Supporting Information

The following documents have been included as part of the PME Briefing pack via the e-tendering portal, Intend -

- PME Briefing Document (this document)
- Mass Participation Running Event - PME 1-1 EOI
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Conflicts of Interest Declaration Form
- Intend Guidance, Supporting Information & Clarification Process.

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

Conflicts Assessment

The Procurement Act 2023 requires the Council to identify and keep under review actual and potential conflicts of interest. The Council must also mitigate conflicts of interest and address circumstances which the Council considers are likely to cause a reasonable person to wrongly believe there to be a conflict or potential conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest arises when an individual's personal interests, relationships, or activities have the potential to interfere with their impartiality or the integrity of the procurement process. This may include financial, personal, familial, or business interests that could improperly influence, or be perceived to influence, their decisions or actions.

Suppliers should refer to Conflicts of Interest Declaration Form for further details of the Council's duty regarding conflict of interests.

Suppliers should complete and submit one conflict of interest declaration per organisation in word format.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

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