



Brief and Details

Stage 1: Expression of Interest Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)

‘The Winter Palace’

at Hampton Court Palace - A Christmas experience

2026-2028

Historic Royal Palaces Reference: HRP-7252

July 2025

Deadline for questions	Friday 8 th August 2025
Deadline for submissions	Friday 15 th August at 5.00pm

1. INTRODUCTION

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is a registered charity, responsible for the care, conservation and presentation of HM Tower of London (TOL), Hampton Court Palace (HCP), Kensington Palace State Apartments, (KP) the Banqueting House at Whitehall (BH), Kew Palace (KEW) and Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, (HCG) the official residence of HM The King in Northern Ireland and residence of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

We love and look after six of the most wonderful palaces in the world. The palaces are the setting for the stories that shape us all, and we're bringing them to people in ways that mean more to them. We want everyone to find themselves in the spaces and stories we share.

HRP is an independent charity, receiving no government funding and derives its income principally from admissions, retail, licensing, commercial events, sponsorship and support from donors and members.

Please visit our website (www.hrp.org.uk) for further information.

2. HRP'S REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Background:

Historic Royal Palaces is tendering for a **Creative Partner for Development and Production of 'The Winter Palace'** at HCP.

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is developing a new multi-generational Christmas experience that will establish Hampton Court Palace (HCP) as an essential must-see offer, launching a tradition of seasonal returns by our visitors.

'The Winter Palace' is a festive world combining high-quality Christmas decorations, atmospheric interventions, dynamic live performance and/or roaming characters, activities and displays.

We are looking for a creative and/or design agency to think holistically about the whole offer, managing (through direct or subcontracting) all elements of 'The Winter Palace'.

The offer will work alongside HCP's existing core seasonal offers [**not part of this tender**]:

- **Hampton Court Palace Ice Rink (20 Nov 2026 – 3 Jan 2027):** Set against the backdrop of Henry VIII's Great Gatehouse, the ice rink is the perfect way to glide into the season. Lace up your skates, bring your loved ones, and get ready for an enchanting experience on the ice. Separately ticketed event.
- **Festive Fayre (4-6 Dec, 11-13 Dec 2026):** Experience the magic of Hampton Court's Festive Fayre where you can indulge in artisan food, drink, sweet treats, shop for unique gifts and enjoy lively festive entertainment. Held in the Palace Gardens, the Festive Fayre is included in the Palace entry ticket.
- **Santa's Grotto Experience (tbc):** Brand new for 2026, HCP will develop a stand-alone family-friendly Grotto experience. This will be a separately ticketed event.

'The Winter Palace' experience will combine:

- **High-quality, multisensory Christmas installations,** spread throughout the palace and courtyards that deliver the magic of Christmas through major installations, festive decorations, AV, sound effects and lighting.

- **Live performance and entertainment**, that places live interactions, encounters and performances centre-stage. Live programming is one of HCP's distinctive USPs and should play an integral part in a large indoor/outdoor Christmas offer.
- **Activities and interactions**, providing visitors with the opportunity to participate in Christmas activities and interactions that brings to life 'The Winter Palace'.
- **Christmas decorations and general dressing**, that visually and atmospherically ties the whole experience together, preserving the magic of Christmas throughout the whole palace!

2.2 Scope of Tender:

This is a two-stage tender process following a Competitive Flexible Procurement process.

Stage 1 consists of a Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ) and expressions of interest (EOI). There will also be the opportunity to ask questions during the 1st stage via email to find out more about the opportunity. These questions will be logged and shared with all potential tenderers via the Delta portal.

Shortlisting: The responses to this questionnaire will be used to short list up to 5 suppliers to be invited to tender in stage 2.

Stage 2 The Invitation to Tender (ITT) will consist of a Technical Proposal, a Commercial proposal and a Presentation.

Q&A Sessions will take place in stage 2. These will be individual sessions for each shortlisted supplier.

Site Visits will take place in stage 2. These will be guided group site visits.

Estimated dates for procurement process:

Stage	Dates
Stage 1 – Procurement Specific Questionnaire. Tender notice advertised.	Mon 21st July 2025
Deadline for Questions	Friday 8 th August 2025
Deadline for submissions for Stage 1	Friday 15 th August 2025
Stage 2 – ITT to be sent to shortlisted suppliers	1 st September 2025
Q&A sessions	10 th , 11 th and 12 th September 2025
Site visits	w/c 15 th September 2025
Invitation to Tender Stage deadline	1 st October 2025
Tender Presentations	w/c 13 th October 2025
Anticipated contract award	November 2025
Contract start date	December 2025

Please note these dates are estimated and can be subject to change.

2.3 Specification of Requirements:

The Specification of Requirements can be found in Annex 1.

Please note that a full specification is still being developed and a final version will be published with the invitation to tender.

2.4 Project Structure:

This tender will be run by the Senior Procurement Manager. The contract will be managed by HRP's Events and Production Manager and Interpretation Manager. The project team will include the Preventative Conservation Manager, Historic Buildings Curator, the Surveyor of the Fabric, and the Marketing Manager.

Key internal Stakeholders will include the Head of Hampton Court Palace, Head of Events and Commercial Services, Head of Marketing and Membership, the Media and PR Team. External Stakeholders will include the Royal Collection Trust who loan many of the collection items currently on display at the palace.

The supplier will be expected to take on the roles of Principal Designer and Principal Contractor role under CDM Regulations

2.5 Project Timings:

'The Winter Palace' will run from the last week of November until the first week of January each year. The Creative Partner should plan and provide a schedule accordingly that allows time for:

- Creative development, in collaboration with HRP's design team
- Drawings, floor plans, and sample materials to be shared, reviewed, and signed off by HRP
- Content review and script sign off
- Off-site production
- Rehearsals off-site and on-site
- An installation schedule that allows for testing and trial runs before the opening weekend at the end of November

2.6 Questionnaire Contents and Evaluation

- Contract specific technical questions & conditions of participation
- Part 1 - Preliminary Questions and Confirmation of Supplier Information
- Part 2 – Additional Exclusions Information
- Part 3 – Conditions of participation

2.7 Budget:

The estimated budget for year one is **£467,000.00**

The value of the contract is estimated at **£1,401,000 over 3 years.**

The Creative Partner has discretion over how this is invested to create 'The Winter Palace' experience, ensuring that all required aspects are covered. Please refer to the specification for more details.

For years two and three of the contract we would hope to decrease the budget due to certain aspects being reused from year one or initial production/manufacturing costs incurred as part of year one.

HRP is open to consider a hire model for decs, networks and props rather than ownership model, especially where this offers a more sustainable approach to procuring items. We will ask for details at the invitation to tender stage.

2.8 Scoring and Shortlisting

- The PSQ will be scored using the following grading criteria. Selection of Pass/Fail questions (pre-qualifying questions/conditions of participation)
- Contract Specific Questions (graded 0-5)

Grading criteria:

Score	Rationale
0	No response provided, evidence sought is absent or what has been provided is irrelevant
1	A poor or incomplete response which is a considerable way from meeting the requirement or standard
2	Below our requirements / the expected standard
3	Compliant in most respects, but lacking some detail or unconvincing in places, which will require clarification and / or further work
4	Fully compliant, meeting our requirements / expectations
5	Fully compliant, exceeding our requirements / expectations

We will be inviting a maximum of 5 suppliers (top scoring suppliers) to the 2nd stage of the procurement.