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Request for Quotation

**Baseline Aquatic Invertebrate Assemblage Survey of Strensall Common SSSI, Worlds End Plantation, Worlds End Grasslands, and Sandburn Wood, Near York.**

## Request for Quotation

**Baseline Aquatic Invertebrate Assemblage Survey of Strensall Common SSSI, Worlds End Plantation, Worlds End Grasslands and Sandburn Wood, Near York.**

You are invited to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification, Section 2.

Please confirm by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote or not.

Your response should be returned to the following email address by:

Email: [simon.christian@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:simon.christian@naturalengland.org.uk)

Date: 17/03/2025

Time: 23:59

Ensure you include the name of the quotation and ‘Final Submission’ in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

**Contact Details and Timeline**

Simon Christian will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote pack or the process. Please submit any questions by email and note that, unless commercially sensitive, both the question and the response will be circulated to all potential tenderers.

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| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| Date of issue of RFQ | 03 March 2025 |
| Deadline for clarifications questions | 11 March 2025 |
| Deadline for receipt of Quotation | 17 March 2025 |
| Intended date of Contract Award | 24 March 2025 |
| Intended Contract Start Date | 1 April 2025 |
| Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration | 31st January 2026 |

**Section 1: General Information**

**Glossary**

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within this Request for Quotation shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

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|  |  |
| “Authority” | means **Natural England** who is the Contracting Authority. |
| “Contract” | means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier. |
| “Response” | means the information submitted by a supplier in response to the RFQ. |
| “RFQ” | means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers. |

**Conditions applying to the RFQ**

You should examine your Response and related documents ensuring it is complete and in accordance with the stated instructions prior to submission.

Your Response must contain sufficient information to enable the Authority to evaluate it fairly and effectively. You should ensure that you have prepared your Response fully and accurately and that prices quoted are arithmetically correct for the units stated.

By submitting a Response, you, the supplier, are deemed to accept the terms and conditions provided in the RFQ. Confirmation of this is required in Annex 2.

Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RFQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this quotation process.

**Acceptance of Quotations**

By issuing this RFQ the Authority does not bind itself to accept any quotation and reserves the right not to award a contract to any supplier who submits a quotation.

**Costs**

The Authority will not reimburse you for any costs and expenses which you incur preparing and submitting your quotation, even if the Authority amends or terminates the procurement process.

**Note at the time of tendering funding for the survey is awaiting confirmation. Award of any contract is dependent upon confirmation of funding.**

**Self-Declaration and Mandatory Requirements**

The RFQ includes a self-declaration response (Annex 1) which covers basic information about the supplier, as well as any grounds for exclusion. If you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

Any mandatory requirements will be set out in Section 2, Specification of Requirements and, if you do not comply with them, your quotation will not be evaluated.

**Clarifications**

Any request for clarification regarding the RFQ and supporting documentation must be submitted via email no later than the deadline for clarifications set out in the Timetable. The Authority shall be under no obligation to respond to queries raised after the clarification deadline.

The Authority will respond to all reasonable clarifications as soon as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. The Authority will publish all clarifications and its responses to all suppliers via email unless deemed commercially sensitive.

If a supplier believes that a request for clarification is commercially sensitive, it should clearly state this when submitting the clarification request. However, if the Authority considers either that:

* the clarification and response are not commercially sensitive; and
* all suppliers may benefit from its disclosure,

then the Authority will notify the supplier (via email), and the supplier will have an opportunity to withdraw the request for clarification by sending a further message requesting the withdrawal of the clarification request. If not withdrawn by the supplier within 2 working days of the Authority’s notification, the Authority may publish the clarification request and its response to all suppliers and the Authority shall not be liable to the supplier for any consequences of such publication.

The Authority reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a quotation and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase to carry out a fair evaluation. Where the Authority seeks clarification on any aspect of the quotation, the supplier must respond within the timeframe requested by the Authority.

**Amendments**

The Authority may amend the RFQ at any time prior to the deadline for receipt. If it amends the RFQ the Authority will notify you via email.

Suppliers may modify their quotation prior to the deadline for Responses. No Responses may be modified after the deadline for Responses.

Suppliers may withdraw their quotations at any time by submitting a notice via the email to the named contact.

**Conditions of Contract**

The Authority’s

* Low Value Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £10k)
* Standard Good and Services Terms & Conditions (used for purchases under £50k)

can be located on the [Natural England Website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) [[here](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/procurement) and will be applicable to any contract awarded as a result of this quotation process. The Authority will not accept any changes to these terms and conditions proposed by a supplier.

Suppliers should note that the quotation provided by the successful bidder will form part of the Contract.

**Prices**

Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, exclusive of VAT.

* Please ensure a quotation is provided for all survey sites.
* Please price against the work described in this specification and annexes and complete the pricing template in Annex 2.
* Financial constraints may limit the scope of survey extent in 2025. Consequently, quotes should be broken down for each of the survey areas, i.e. Strensall Common SSSI, Worlds End Former Plantation, Worlds End Grasslands, and Sandburn Wood (see section 2 for further detail).

**Disclosure**

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice. For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

Further to the Government’s transparency agenda, all UK Government organisations must advertise on Contract Finder in accordance with the following publication thresholds:

Central Contracting Authority’s: £12,000

Sub Central Contracting Authority’s and NHS Trusts: £30,000

For the purpose of this RFQ the Authority is classified as a Central Contracting Authoritywith a publication threshold of £12,000 inclusive of VAT.

If this opportunity is advertised via Contracts Finder, we are obliged to publish details of the awarded contract including who has won the contract, the contract value, and indicate whether the winning supplier is a small and medium-sized enterprise (“SMEs”) or voluntary organisation or charity. A copy of the contract must also be published with confidential information redacted.

By submitting a Response, you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

**Disclaimers**

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

* make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
* accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
* accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

**Information Security requirements**

The Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP) sets out the administrative system used by HM Government (HMG) to protect information and data assets appropriately against prevalent threats through the use of ‘classification tiers’. HMG uses three classification tiers; OFFICIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET. Each tier provides a set of recommended baseline behaviours and a set of protective controls, which are proportionate to the threat profile for that tier AND the potential impact of a compromise, accidental loss or incorrect disclosure of information held within that tier.

Tenderers and suppliers must ensure that appropriate protective security controls are in place to comply with the GSCP and manage the information shared and received as part of this tender exercise.

A full suite of guidance documents is available on GOV.UK, with specific guidance for tenderers and suppliers set out in [Guidance 1.6 - Contractors and Contracting Authorities.docx (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166155/Guidance_1.6_-_Contractors_and_Contracting_Authorities.pdf)

**Use of Artificial Intelligence Reference:**

The Authority expects suppliers to declare where they have used AI software in the creation of Tender responses or intend to use AI software in the performance of the contract. How any AI software was, or will be, used should be to be declared within the technical submission part of the tender. We may require you to answer specific question/s on this topic, particularly where the Authority expects that usage is highly likely or clearly relates to the contract requirements.

Suppliers must follow any guidelines or regulations related to AI use and declarations as indicated in the [PPN 2/24 Improving Transparency of AI use in Procurement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement/ppn-0224-improving-transparency-of-ai-use-in-procurement-html)

Any information, instructions, or data provided by the Authority to suppliers as part of this tender, the requirements, or contract should not be directly inserted into Generative AI software (such as Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot) without prior permission, unless this information is clearly published in the public domain.

Use of any Authority confidential tender information for training AI software is prohibited. it is advised that Defra’s data or instructions, or anything marked as confidential should not be directly inserted into AIs. For example, putting Authority’s instruction email into Gemini, ChatGPT, or CoPilot is not recommended.

If you intend to use AI to provide goods or services to the Authority, then you are required to complete a declaration which is simply answering the question stated within the 'Information to be returned’. The answer to this question will not be used in scoring your quote.

**Protection of Personal Data**

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the supplier must agree to the following:

* You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority.
* You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
* You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
* Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
* Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
* You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
* On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

**General Data Protection Regulations 2018**

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be held and destroyed within two years of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within seven years of the contract’s expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)**

The Client is striving to create a diverse and inclusive working environment where every individual has equality of opportunity to progress and to apply their unique insights to making the UK a great place for living. The Service Provider is expected to respect this commitment in all dealings with Natural England staff and service users.

Suppliers are expected to;

* support Defra group to achieve its Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and to support delivery of [Defra group’s Equality & Diversity Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024/defra-group-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2020-to-2024).
* meet the standards set out in the [Government’s Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplier-code-of-conduct)
* work with Defra group to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion impacts are addressed (positive and negative) in the goods, services and works we procure, barriers are removed and opportunities realised.

**Sustainable Procurement**

Addressing global sustainability impacts and realising additional community benefits within commercial activity is core to Defra group’s approach, working with its supply chain is key to achieving sustainable outcomes. In addition to supporting Defra group to meet its outcomes we look to understand and reduce negative sustainability impacts associated with our commercial activity and realise benefits.

The Client encourages its suppliers to share these values, work to address negative impacts and realise opportunities, measure performance and success.

Suppliers are expected to have an understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the interconnections between them and the relevance to the Goods, Services and works procured on the Client’s behalf

**Conflicts of Interest**

The concept of a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any situation where an Involved Person or Relevant Body has directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure and/or affect the integrity of the contract award.

We expect suppliers to mitigate appropriately against any real or perceived conflict of interest through their work with government. A supplier with a position of influence gained through a contract should not use that position to unfairly disadvantage any other supplier or reduce the potential for future competition.

Where the supplier is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a conflict of interest or has any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise you should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after they have submitted a quotation). Tenderers should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the procurement and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to properly manage any conflicts of interest may result in a quotation being rejected.

Provided that it has been carried out in an open, fair and transparent manner, routine pre-market engagement carried out by the Authority should not represent a conflict of interest for the supplier.

**Section 2: The Invitation**

The Authority is Natural England. The Authority’s priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)

**Background**

Natural England require a baseline aquatic invertebrate survey of Strensall Common SSSI, Worlds End Plantation, Worlds End Grasslands and Sandburn Wood, to be carried out.

Strensall Common is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) primary for its heathland vegetation (<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteList.aspx?siteName=Strensall%20&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&DesignationType=All> ). Dry heath is dominated by Heather *Calluna vulgaris*, while extensive areas of Purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* characterise the wet heath. The site also supports significant woodland and wetland vegetation. National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys are available for Strensall Common (Wold Ecology, 2009) and adjacent World’s End sites (Haycock & Jay Associates, 2023), but not for Sandburn Wood.

Strensall Common SSSI has also long been recognised as being important for invertebrates, supporting a number of locally and nationally rare species. Strensall Common is recognised as an important northern English site, in terms of diversity and abundance, for: moths (more than 400 species including the only known English site for the Dark Bordered Beauty), butterflies (26 species), damselflies and dragonflies (21 species) and aquatic invertebrates. Invertebrate assemblages are however not currently considered notified features.

Worlds End Plantation is an area of heathland restored from conifer plantation in the early 2000s. The area supports areas of wet and dry heath, together with ponds and secondary woodland.

Worlds End Grassland is an extensive area of rush pasture and wet heath, with a number of small ponds and ditches. The majority of the site is cut for hay from mid-July.

Sandburn Wood is an area of woodland that has been in existence since the nineteenth century. Small wetland areas survive as glades amongst the woodland and may support invertebrates of interest. No existing invertebrate information is available for this area. Only the open glades (c. <3ha) require invertebrate surveys to be undertaken.

**Aquatic habitats**

There are numerous ponds and pools on Strensall Common, the oldest probably originating as peat cuttings and clay pits. Others have been created during the period of military occupation from the 1880s onwards, including several excavated in recent years for conservation purposes. The Freshwater Habitats Trust has identified Strensall as a ‘Flagship Pond Site’ due to the exceptionally high value of its aquatic biodiversity (Hammond, 2016). Two previous aquatic surveys have been carried out. A detailed study of three ponds on Strensall Common (Hammond, 2016) showed they were of high ecological quality, supporting rich invertebrate assemblages typical of both fen and acid mire habitats. An earlier study at World’s End (Hammond, 1998), revealed an impressive water beetle assemblage, containing scarce species. This is likely due to the diverse habitats, including long-established stock-watering ponds and a drain network with base-rich, unpolluted water. Yorkshire Dragonfly Group have reported 21 species of dragonflies and damselflies with confirmed breeding of 19 species. Strensall Common has been known to support the pond mud snail (*Omphiscola glabra*) <https://cdn.buglife.org.uk/2019/08/Pond-mud-snail_0.pdf> .

Numerous ponds, pools and ditches/drains are present across all the survey areas.

**Aim**

The aim of this contract is to undertake a comprehensive, aquatic invertebrate survey throughout 2025, on both the existing ‘Strensall Common SSSI’ and adjacent proposed SSSI sites: ‘World’s End Former Plantation’, ‘World’s End Grasslands’ and ‘Sandburn Wood - wetland glades’.

Figure 1: Location of survey areas

A map of a city

Description automatically generated

Financial constraints may limit the scope of survey extent in 2025. Consequently, quotes should be broken down for each of the survey areas, i.e. Strensall Common SSSI, Worlds End Former Plantation, Worlds End Grasslands, and Sandburn Wood.

The survey should build on existing, partial baseline information (e.g. Hammond, 1998, 2016 and other available third-party data) to provide up-to-date evidence:

* Describe the occurrence of key invertebrate species and assemblages in relation to aquatic features and habitats, and the extents/locations of such features over the entire areas of the sites.
* Evaluate the conservation quality of recorded species, samples and assemblages in local, regional and national contexts, using appropriate, recognised metrics.
* Identify any ‘Specific Assemblage Types’ of invertebrates, following definitions in Pantheon.
* Provide descriptions of wetland features and habitats and identify both ongoing pressures and optimal management.

The results will help Natural England determine whether Strensall Common and adjacent sites fulfil the requirements for SSSI designation for invertebrate features, according to notification guidelines <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/747968a5-a8a7-4bd6-b12c-3329c3b5b6ca/SSSI-Guidelines-20-Invertebrates-2019.pdf> (Curson et al., 2019) to which reference should be made when reporting. A companion survey of terrestrial invertebrates was partially done in 2024 and is due to be completed in 2025.

**Methods**

**Approach / Reconnaissance**  
If the area is not well known to the contractor, pre-survey reconnaissance of the indicative survey locations should be carried out to determine the general nature and extent of the habitats and to confirm suitable locations for sampling. It is estimated that a preliminary walk-over assessment of all the proposed survey locations would take a maximum of two full days. Following any initial reconnaissance, Natural England would welcome any advice or recommendations regarding the locations to be sampled, which can be discussed at an inception meeting.

**Field Methods / Technical Specification**

* **Timing and number of visits**: Make sufficient visits (daytime only), starting at the beginning of April (or as soon as contract is let whichever is the earlier) and finishing at the end of September, to capture complete seasonal turnover in aquatic assemblages. This is assumed to mean roughly monthly visits, although sampling may be focussed on spring and early summer (April – June) if these are the main active periods. The contractor should decide precise timings in relation to progress of the season and weekly variations in weather. The tenderer should demonstrate how they will cover the survey areas and how the visits will be organised in terms of personnel and timescales.
* **Number of sampling locations**: The contractor should judge this, based on achieving representative samples from the range of wetland habitats available, e.g. permanent ponds, temporary pools, and ditches/drains on each of the main sites (Strensall Common, World’s End Former Plantation, World’s End Grasslands and Sandburn Wood).

The contractor should aim for a minimum of 3 locations per habitat, per site (to provide replication). Sampling locations on Strensall Common should include as a minimum Kidney Pond, Pillwort scrape, Crossley’s Pond and the drainage system within the firing ranges; but recognise that such a large site is likely to support other water bodies with unique characteristics, which justify inclusion. Sample locations should capture variation relevant to aquatic assemblages, e.g., water quality and depth, underlying substrate, vegetation type and cover, degree of shading etc.

* **Sampling methods:** Survey to include active and passive sampling methods, as appropriate for aquatic assemblages (Drake et al, 2007), e.g. pond netting and bottle traps for larvae and adults (setting and collecting of passive traps should not count as survey visits, unless active sampling is carried out at the same time). It is anticipated that the main taxonomic groups sampled will be *Coleoptera, Heteroptera, Trichoptera, Odonata, Mollusca, Crustacea* and *Hirundinea*. An estimate of the status of the pond mud snail (*Omphiscola glabra*) should be made if possible.
* **Sample location descriptions:** Record the estimated dimensions of sampled wetland features and their biophysical quality, e.g. conductivity, pH, temperature. On each visit, record the date, start and finish times, observer name and weather conditions. Record the number of any existing site unit for SSSI land.
* **Vegetation**: Contractor should aim to identify the surrounding vegetation to broad habitat type e.g. wet heath/dry heath/acid grassland.
* **Photography**: Take illustrative photographs of all sampling locations.
* **Mapping**: Record sample location grid references (10 figure ‘x’ and ‘y’ coordinates format that can be input to mapping software). It is important to be able to geolocate the samples to allow geospatial cross-referencing with other data sources.

**Access Arrangements**

Natural England will initially obtain landowner/manager permission in advance of the surveys and provide approximate timings of site visits.  Land manager contact details will be provided at the start of the contract by Natural England. The contractor will then liaise directly with landowners and occupiers to arrange specific dates and times for access. **Permissions must be obtained at least 48 hours prior to monitoring**. Any refusals or other issues should be notified to the Natural England project officer within 3 working days. **Note specific requirements relating to MOD land in the Health & Safety section below.**

**Analysis and Reporting - Outputs**

The outputs, unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Project Officer, will be as detailed in this section.  Technical queries on Pantheon will be directed to Natural England’s invertebrate specialist Richard Smith [richard.smith@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:richard.smith@naturalengland.org.uk) .

Regular updates via an e-mail summary of work progress should be sent to the project officer.

A written record of fieldwork and surveys completed, and an electronic copy of the draft report should be submitted in accordance with the timescales below for review by the Natural England project officer.

Draft reports should be provided in MS Word format for comment. All written outputs must be formatted using guidance provided by Natural England in order to meet our publishing and accessibility requirements [Natural England publishing standards for commissioned reports - NECR000](https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5790636781600768)

The report should be concise and is expected to include:

* **Executive summary**, covering all elements of the work, from background to methods, analysis, results and conclusion.
* **Introduction**, including summary of site details and a simple site map.
* **Methods**, including map/s at appropriate scale of sample locations and their grid references; sampling techniques and their specifications; time spent and dates, to quantify survey effort.
* **Analysis** – Input species lists from combined datasets for similar habitats, e.g. temporary ponds, permanent ponds, drains, on a per site basis (i.e. Strensall Common, World’s End, Sandburn Wood) to the Pantheon tool, to analyse membership of Specific Assemblage Types and generate Species Quality Scores <https://www.brc.ac.uk/pantheon/>
* The output table from the Pantheon analysis should be saved as a .csv file (suitable for importing to Excel) and provided with the report.
* **Results** - Present findings from the survey, consider using tables where these show numerical information best:
* The assessor’s professional opinion of the invertebrates found in each habitat / sample location, with reference to: biophysical characteristics, broad habitat type, any negative indicators and a view on site condition. Include a brief description to show how the location relates to the wider habitat. Photos may be inserted here or added separately in an appendix (see below).
* species assemblage presence, abundance and habitat information. Indicate the distributions of key invertebrates, i.e. threatened species that could be individually notified.
* Habitat information, including size and quality of the resource at a whole site scale, with clear and concise recommendations for management to benefit the assemblage/s.
* The assessor’s professional opinion on: any potential climate change impacts on the wetland habitat and its species / assemblage, such as potential range shifts of species or habitat degradation; and any potential management mitigations or changes in designation that may be appropriate based on projections.
* Summary of species with conservation value, especially IUCN Red List status.
* Tabulated Pantheon species counts for any Specific Assemblage Types found (broken down by sample location and aquatic habitat type).
* Tabulated Species Quality Scores (broken down by sample location and aquatic habitat type).
* **Excel spreadsheet** - Present all species raw data as separate rows, with column headings for Species name, vernacular name (where present), Family, Order, Sample location no., Grid reference (in format of x and y coordinates that can be input to mapping software), Site (e.g. Strensall Common or other), date, no. of individuals recorded at that location x date, Pantheon output information: Conservation Status, National Rarity, Specific Assemblage Type. This format allows data to be summarised in different ways using the Pivot Table function, using any of the column headings.
* **Photos** - should be included, either embedded within the report or as an appendix (if many photos are used, leading to large file sizes, e.g., >20Mb, consider placing the photos in an appendix, as a separate file); hint – inserting photos into a 4 x 2 table, with 4 photos per page, affords adequate resolution. Captions can be written in separate rows.
* **References** - Include a list of published references that have been referred to in the text.

**Payment**

The Authority will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

The Authority’s preference is for all invoices to be sent electronically, quoting a valid Purchase Order number. Invoice should be submitted on completion of final report.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 10 months to end no later than 31st January 2026. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in writing in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

**Health and Safety.**

The contractor must ensure that all the works are undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its associated regulations.

Where there are no statutory legislative controls the contractor should follow the industry best practice, always ensuring personnel are properly protected, trained and competent to carry out the operations being undertaken.

The contractor is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the contract workforce. All accidents are to be reported to Natural England via the project officer. You should enclose your own risk assessment for the work to be done with your quotation submission. If lone working is to be carried out during any survey work, a specific section on lone working needs to be included in the risk assessment.

**Note parts of Strensall Common are a military training area. Access is restricted to the danger template shown by red arrows on the map below for significant periods with unrestricted access tending to only be available one day a week (usually Fridays). No ground disturbance is permitted without the permission of Defence Estates personnel who should be informed when on site. Details of contacts will be provided to the successful contractor.**

A map of a city

Description automatically generated

**Timing**

A draft report to be produced by 31 December 2025 with final report submitted by 31 January 2026.

**Evaluation Methodology**

We will award this contract in line with the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) as set out in the following award criteria:

Technical – 70%

Commercial – 30%

Evaluation criteria

Evaluation weightings are 70% technical and 30% commercial, the winning tenderer will be the highest scoring combined score.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Award Criteria | Weighting (%) | Evaluation Topic & Weighting | Sub-Criteria | Weighted Question |
| Technical | 70% | Service / Product Proposal | Approach and Methodology | 1 Question  Q1.1 (30% of technical score available)  **Please confirm your understanding of the methodology and ability to deliver according to this specification.** |
| Capacity, Capability and Expertise | 2 Questions  Q2.1 (20% of technical score available)  **Please provide the relevant qualifications and experience of the key (named) personnel who will deliver the requirements of this project.**  Q2.2 (20% of technical score available)  **Please confirm your capacity for delivering the specification within the required timescales.** |
| Project Management | 2 Questions  Q3.1 (10% of technical score available)  **How do you intend to manage the project to identify risks and ensure that project tasks are achieved within the timescales, to a high standard, and to budget?**  Q3.2 (10% of technical score available)  **How do you intend to quality assure work undertaken as part of this project?** |
| Health and Safety | 1 Question  Q4.1 (10% of technical score available)  **Provide a short assessment of potential health and safety risks associated with the project and how you would mitigate these.** |
| Commercial | 30% | Whole life cost of the proposed Contract | Commercial Model | 100% of commercial score available |

**Technical (70%)**

Technical evaluations will be based on responses to specific questions covering key criteria which are outlined below. Scores for questions will be based on the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | Score | Definition |
| Very good | 100 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. There are no weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority complete confidence that all the requirements will be met to a high standard. |
| Good | 70 | Addresses all the Authority’s requirements with all the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains minor weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that all the requirements will be met to a good standard. |
| Moderate | 50 | Addresses most of the requirements with most of the relevant supporting information set out in the RFQ. The response contains moderate weaknesses and therefore the tender response gives the Authority confidence that most of the requirements will be met to a suitable standard. |
| Weak | 20 | Substantially addresses the requirements but not all and provides supporting information that is of limited or no relevance or a methodology containing significant weaknesses and therefore raises concerns for the Authority that the requirements may not all be met. |
| Unacceptable | 0 | No response or provides a response that gives the Authority no confidence that the requirement will be met. |

Technical evaluation is assessed using the evaluation topics and sub-criteria stated in the Evaluation Criteria section above.

Separate submissions for each technical question should be provided and will be evaluated in isolation. Tenderers should provide answers that meet the criteria of each technical question.

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| **Approach and methodology** | Detailed Evaluation Criteria |
| Q1.1 Please confirm your understanding of the methodology and ability to deliver according to this specification. | Your response should:  Demonstrate a clear understanding of the nature of the requirements.  Provide examples of previous contracts for undertaking invertebrate surveys for site evaluations and site condition monitoring on SSSI sites. |

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| **Capacity, Capability and Expertise** | **Detailed Evaluation Criteria** |
| Q.2.1 Please provide the relevant qualifications and experience of the key (named) personnel who will deliver the requirements of this project. | Your response should demonstrate your team has:  Qualifications, technical merit and experience to deliver the specification, evidenced by e.g. CVs, previous invertebrate survey / contracts, technical qualifications.  Particular reference should be made to experience of undertaking aquatic invertebrate surveys and identification of the key groups referred to in the specification. |
| Q.2.2 Please confirm your capacity for delivering the specification within the required timescales. | Your response should demonstrate your team has the capability for undertaking the project, with a proposed outline schedule or timetable of works.  Referring to the tasks/activities outlined, your response should demonstrate:  Sufficient time allowed for each stage and task, in particular confirming that the survey visits can spread throughout the season as specified.  Staff with appropriate level of experience and knowledge involved in each stage and task. |

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| **Project Management** | **Detailed Evaluation Criteria** |
| Q.3.1 How do you intend to manage the project to identify risks and ensure that project tasks are achieved within the timescales, to a high standard, and to budget? | Your response should indicate:  How the project will be managed, by whom, and what measures will ensure successful delivery.  Details of organisational and project management skills to deliver all aspects of the requirement in full. This must include an assessment of the risks to project delivery and mitigation (including contingency in the event of delays).  Confirmation you are able to meet the required deadlines.  Risks to project delivery and how you would mitigate these. |
| Q.3.2 How do you intend to quality assure work undertaken as part of this project? | Your response should demonstrate:  Your quality assurance processes and measures.  Outline what experience you have in relation to quality assurance for similar projects. |

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| **Health and Safety** | **Detailed Evaluation Criteria** |
| Q4.1 Provide a short assessment of potential health and safety risks associated with the project and how you would mitigate these. | Your response should:  Identify and describe how you will manage any health and safety issues associated with this project. Please provide examples of the following documents as evidence of your risk management, health and safety and environmental policies and procedures:  • A field survey risk assessment  • Lone working practices  • Any Health and Safety policies and certificates |

**Commercial 30%.**

The Contract is to be awarded as a 'fixed price'which will be paid according to the completion of the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements.

Suppliers are required to submit a total cost to provide the deliverables stated in the Specification of Requirements. In addition to this the Commercial Response template must be completed to provide a breakdown of the whole life costs against deliverables describe in the specification used in the delivery of this requirement.

Calculation Method

The method for calculating the weighted scores is as follows:

Commercial

Score = (Lowest Quotation Price / Supplier’s Quotation Price) x 30%(Maximum available marks)

Technical

Score = (Bidder’s Total Technical Score / Highest Technical Score) x 70%(Maximum available marks)

The total score (weighted) (TWS) is then calculated by adding the total weighted commercial score (WC) to the total weighted technical score (WT): WC + WT = TWS.

**Information to be returned.**

Please note, the following information requested must be provided. Incomplete tender submissions may be discounted.

Please complete and return the following information:

* completed Commercial Response template for each survey area;
* separate response submission for each technical question (in accordance with the response instructions)
* completed AI question ''Do you use Artificial Intelligence (AI) or machine learning tools, including large language models within your quote submission or service delivery processes?'' response which will not be scored, is to be returned within technical response
* completed Mandatory Requirements (Annex 1)
* completed Acceptance of Terms and Conditions (Annex 2)

**Award**

Once the evaluation of the Response(s) is complete all suppliers will be notified of the outcome via email.

The successful supplier will be issued the contract via a Purchase Order.

**References**

Curson J, Howe M, Webb J, Heaver D & Tonhasca A (2019). Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs Part 2: Detailed Guidelines for Habitats and Species Groups. Chapter 20 Invertebrates. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Drake CM, Lott DA, Alexander KNA & Webb, J (2007). Surveying terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates for conservation evaluation. Natural England Research Report NERR005.

Hammond, M (1998). Water beetles at World’s End pSSSI. Unpublished report to English Nature, 2pp.

Hammond, M (2016). Strensall Common pond survey. Unpublished report for the Freshwater Habitats Trust, Martin Hammond Ecology, 25pp.

Haycock & Jay Associates (2023). World’s End, Adjacent Strensall Common, York. National Vegetation Classification. Unpublished report to Natural England, 32pp.

Wold Ecology (2009). Strensall Common National Vegetation Classification Survey. Unpublished report to Natural England, 84pp.

**Annex 1 Mandatory Requirements**

**Part 1 Potential Supplier Information**

Please answer the following self-declaration questions in full and include this Annex in your quotation response.

**Part 1.1 Potential Supplier Information:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information |  |
| 1.1(b) | Registered office address (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(c) | Company registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(d) | Charity registration number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(e) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable) |  |
| 1.1(f) | Registered VAT number |  |
| 1.1(g) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? | (Yes / No) |

Note: See EU definition of SME <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en>

**Part 1.2 Contact details and declaration**

By submitting a quotation to this RFQ I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay you will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |  |
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| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 1.2(a) | Contact name |  |
| 1.2(b) | Name of organisation |  |
| 1.2(c) | Role in organisation |  |
| 1.2(d) | Phone number |  |
| 1.2(e) | E-mail address |  |
| 1.2(f) | Postal address |  |
| 1.2(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
| 1.2(h) | Date |  |

**Part 2 Exclusion Grounds**

**Part 2.1 Grounds for mandatory exclusion**

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| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.1(a) | Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below. | |
|  | Participation in a criminal organisation. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Corruption. | ((Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Fraud. | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Money laundering or terrorist financing | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
|  | Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.1 (b) |
| 2.1(b) | If you have answered yes to question 2.1(a), please provide further details.  Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction.  Identity of who has been convicted  If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. |  |
| 2.1 (c) | If you have answered Yes to any of the points above have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (i.e. Self-Cleaning) | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(d) | Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | (Yes / No) |
| 2.1(e) | If you have answered yes to question 2.3(a), please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. |  |

**Part 2.2 Grounds for discretionary exclusion**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Question no. | Question | Response |
| 2.2(a) | The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [webpage](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation | |
| 2.2(b) | Breach of environmental obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(c) | Breach of social obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(d) | Breach of labour law obligations? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2(e) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | (Yes / No)  If yes please provide details at 2.2 (f) |
| 2.2 (f) | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self Cleaning) |  |

**Annex 2 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions**

I/We accept in full the terms and conditions appended to this Request for Quote document.

Company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_