



HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

A Guide for Contractors and Suppliers

October 2006

This guide has been published to help contractors and suppliers tender for contracts let by Bromsgrove District Council. It also provides an insight into our tender procedures for supplies and services.

Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council spends approximately £9.5 million each year with organisations of all sizes with a wide range of commercial opportunities.

A lack of information about opportunities and a lack of understanding of the Council's contracting procedures rules may be stopping some organisations from applying for Council Contracts. This guide aims to help overcome these difficulties and explains how to apply for contracts that are advertised and what is expected of you when working for the Council.

There is a great deal of competition for the Council's contracts and this guide cannot assure individual firms success, however, it should provide enough information to give you the opportunity to be considered for Council work.

About Us

Bromsgrove District Council has established a Corporate Procurement Unit whose role is to ensure that all procurement projects are undertaken within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations and EU legislation. The Council's aim with procurement is to use a variety of methods and contractual arrangements to help deliver The Council's Objectives, Vision and Values and to deliver high quality services to the local community.

Procurement is devolved to all Budget Holders within the authority. Our aim is to provide value for money on supplies and services bought and leased by the Council. This does not mean the cheapest but a balance between cost, quality and performance.

Implementing Electronic Government

Implementing Electronic Government is one of the ways in which Government is modernising public services to enable citizens, customers and businesses to conduct their relationships with public agencies by any means they find convenient. Whilst some organisations use traditional methods to do business with us we are encouraging our citizens, customers and businesses to use electronic means where ever possible.

For Procurement Implementing Electronic Government means reductions in costs associated with administration, invoice queries, credit control, prompt payment and enhanced customer relations for both ourselves and our suppliers.

For those companies who currently may not have any IT infrastructure grants may be available through Business Link subject to qualification criteria. Please contact your local branch office of Business Link for further details of their scheme and how to apply for a grant.

How to find out about our contracts

You will find a list of our current contracts and those due for renewal on our website. Currently we tender for all goods and services over the value of £75,000 anything less than this is termed as a quotation. The Council encourages competition and welcomes bids from a wide range of businesses. Contracts are awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous solution for the Council taking into account whole life costs, quality and sustainability. The Council cannot discriminate in favour

of local suppliers but they will be given every encouragement to compete for contracts

Over the last two years we have also shared procurement projects with a number of our neighbours. This ensures that the Council gains advantage by the aggregates such contracts afford and in addition shares the costs associated with the procurement exercise.

Lists of Potential Suppliers

Currently we are looking at setting up a list of such suppliers and contractors with our neighbouring authorities so that Bromsgrove District Councils budget holders may use them for tender exercises for those contracts which do not exceed the European thresholds which as of the end of January 2006 stood at:

- Services & Supplies £144,361
- Works £3,611,319.

Suppliers/Contractors will be able to apply to become listed for their individual supply or work areas as there will be separate categories on the lists. Further details (including application forms) of how contractors can obtain approval can be found at.....

If your company applies to go on the Council's Contractor Standing list or expresses an interest in an OJEU advertised Select List Tender, you will be asked to complete the relevant form or a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) giving more comprehensive Company details, financial and technical background and information covering Equalities, Health and Safety and your Environmental Policy.

Tender Advertising

Where the contract value exceeds £75,000 but falls under the European threshold (i.e services and supplies £144,361 and works £3,611,319) the advertisement will be in the national press and/or appropriate technical journal.

Where the value of the contract exceeds the European threshold (i.e services and supplies over £144,361 and works over £3,611,319) it will also be advertised in the national press and the Official Journal of European Union (OJEU). OJEU can be accessed electronically via their website www.ojeudaily.com. There are different types of tendering procedures that can be adopted (i.e. Open, Restricted, Negotiated or Accelerated). Each procedure imposes minimum timescales covering the tender process to ensure that reasonable time to respond to adverts and prepare submissions is given to all interested parties. Bromsgrove District Council will normally use the Restricted Procedure wherein potential suppliers responding to the advert are required to complete a questionnaire to assess their suitability to tender for the contract. A shortlist is drawn up of the firms best able to meet the criteria, these firms only are sent a full set of tender documents.

Under EU regulations a Notice of all Contract Awards must be placed in OJEU and unsuccessful tenderers de-briefed.

How to tender for Council Contracts

When a supplier applies for a tender a set of tender documents will be issued and will consist of:

- A letter of Invitation to Tender (Document 1)
- The Conditions of the Tender (Document 2)
- Bromsgrove District Councils Terms & Conditions (Document 3)
- A detailed and comprehensive Specification for the requirement (Document 4)
- Tender Pricing Schedule (Document 5)
- Form of Tender (Document 6)
- Certificate of Non-canvassing (Document 7)

The forms are all linked and easy to understand you are almost led by the hand through the process thus making the whole process of bidding for Council contracts much easier.

Good procurement practice underpins many of the Council's objectives, helping to ensure that high quality, cost effective services are provided. It is an integral part of our performance management, which links the Council's community leadership role and corporate planning with service delivery.

In particular, there are a number of Council policies that suppliers, contractors and consultants should be aware of. Two key policies are mentioned below:

Equalities in relation to procurement and contracts

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity irrespective of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. We aim to ensure that our procurement activities are operated in a way that is non-discriminatory. Our suppliers, contractors and consultants are expected to have equal opportunity policies in place, which comply with all relevant and current legislation and codes of practice. They are also expected to demonstrate actions they have taken to integrate their equal opportunities policy into their organisation.

If you wish to do business with the Council, you need to have an awareness and understanding of our commitment to equalities. In particular, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on public authorities to promote racial equality and prevent racial discrimination. You can find out more by viewing our Race Equality scheme in the 'About the Council' section on the Community pages of our web site or by looking at the Commission for Racial Equality's web site www.cre.gov.uk which includes a number of good practice guides.

The Employers Organisation for Local Government, in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission and Local Government Association have produced an 'equality standard for Local Government' which the Council uses as a framework for delivering equality in employment and service delivery. Visit the Employers Organisation web-site www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/equality/index.html for more information.

Health & Safety

The Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff and that of all others who are affected by its business and operations. Successful contractors, suppliers and consultants are required to comply fully with health & safety legislation and also to be fully committed to ensuring the health & safety of its staff, customers and others.

Depending upon the nature of the goods/services/works, organisations may be required to submit to the Council, for review, their Health & Safety Policy and, where

appropriate, their risk assessments and method statements for work to be carried out for the Council.

Finance Information

In this section you are asked for certain financial information relating to your business for each of the last three years. If you are a Private Limited Company or a Public Limited Company you must submit fully audited accounts as registered with Companies House. Other applicants including voluntary and community organisation should forward copies of internal management accounts or a certified statement of turnover.

Equal Opportunities

The Council strongly supports equal opportunity, and equal access for all sections of the community. We strive to ensure the standards we expect internally are supported by our suppliers.

Sustainability

We are committed to the sustainable development of the Bromsgrove District an objective of the Council which aims at protection and enhancement of the environment. In order to promote this we expect our suppliers to demonstrate similar levels of environmental care and commitment.

The amount of supporting documentation requested will reflect the size of the company tendering for the contract.

All companies will undergo a financial health check before a contract is awarded.

E-Tendering

The Council has no immediate plans to introduce this type of tendering at the moment but will consider future requirements with its partners within the Worcestershire Procurement Forum.

Tender Evaluation

Returned tenders will be evaluated against pre-determined criteria. Evaluation will focus on examining how tender proposals deliver the service (quality) and the cost of the service (price) over the term of the contract.

The Council will award the contract on the basis of "Best Value". The definition of Best Value is *"the purchase of all goods and services on the most advantageous terms and conditions having regard to value for money and including price, quality, quantity, reliability, fitness for purpose, timeliness and reliability of the delivery, economy over time, reliable after sales service, environmental considerations and total cost to the authority"*.

Those tenderers shortlisted may also be requested to give presentations on their offerings prior to contracts finally being awarded

Contract Award

If you are successful in your tender submission you will be notified in writing and may be requested to sign a "form of agreement" to signify acceptance of the contract.

Debriefing

If you are unsuccessful you will also be notified in writing. You may also request feedback on why your tender submission was un-successful.

Contract Performance

All accepted suppliers are monitored throughout the contract period against the pre-defined performance criteria stated in the tender documents.

Contracts have to be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation.

The Council is continuously striving to improve its performance and it expects its suppliers to do the same.

Council Contacts

For all enquiries please contact our Corporate Procurement Unit

e mail: a.haslam@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Or write to:

Bromsgrove District Council
The Corporate Procurement Unit
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
B60 1AA