

Higher value contracts

Pre-qualification

Questionnaires are often used as a means of assessing and short-listing applicants for select tender lists for supplies of goods and for specific service contracts.

The pre-qualification questionnaires vary according to the nature of the contract being considered but will usually include the following:

- ***General Information***
The general information requested provides basic details about a prospective supplier and verifies that it can be identified as a legitimate, discrete trading organisation.
- ***Financial Information***
Depending on the size and nature of the contract, companies may be asked for certain financial information relating to the recent historical performance of the company. This information is used to assess the financial position of the organisation in relation to the size of contract. Information is also required to check that an organisation is registered (if appropriate) for tax purposes and complies with specific insurance requirements.
- ***Technical Resources and References***
Information is requested to enable the council to assess the resources a prospective supplier has at its disposal to carry out the contract. By taking up references the council will be able to make an assessment of past performance.
- ***Equal Opportunities***
The council strongly supports equal opportunity, equal access and positive outcomes for all sections of the community and aims to ensure that organisations that provide services on behalf of the council comply with equal opportunity legislation and promote equality of opportunity.
- ***Health and Safety***
Depending upon the nature of the goods and/or services, prospective suppliers may be required to submit a health and safety policy which refers to health and safety legislation. Historical data may also be requested which indicates their record and performance in health and safety issues.

Tendering For Contracts

If an organisation is successful in applying for a tender, a set of tender documents will be forwarded. Occasionally the council may use an open tendering procedure. This means that that all applicants will be invited to tender for the contract.

The tender documents will typically consist of all or some of the following:

- **Letter of Invitation**
This will advise where, and by when, tenders should be submitted.
- **Instructions to Tenderers**
This provides guidance for completing the tender documentation.
- **Form of Tender**
The Company's agreement to the terms and conditions of the tender.
- **Terms and Conditions of Contract**
Defines how the council will let the contract, the rules the tenderer must comply with and the relationship between the council and the successful contractor.
- **Specification**
Sets out what needs to be achieved including policies, procedures or guidelines to be followed. It sets out the performance standards and outcomes expected. It will also list the key criteria which will be used to assess bids received and to select the winner. This will normally be a combination of quality criteria and overall costs.
- **Pricing Arrangements**
The pricing document where the tenderer enters their price for performance of the contract.
- **Quality requirements/ Method statements**
Defines how a company intends to provide the supplies or service, and provides evidence demonstrating relevant experience and capacity. This will be used in evaluating the bid. A company will be expected to demonstrate its commitment to council policies as outlined in the documentation.
- **Any other relevant information**

Tender Evaluation and Contract Award

All tenders received by the closing time for tenders will be evaluated against the relevant criteria. The council will select the winning bidder on the basis of overall value for money. Evaluation will focus on examining how the tender proposals will deliver the service (quality and reliability) and the cost of the service (price and associated costs). The balance between quality and cost will be dependent upon the particular service area. The successful tenderer will be notified in writing or by e-mail.

Contract Monitoring

Suppliers and contractors will be monitored to assess their compliance to any service level agreement forming part of any contract. Contracts have to be performed in accordance with the requirements set out in the documentation. Contract conditions will be strictly applied.

The Council is continuously striving to improve its performance in all aspects of the organisation and it expects its contractors to do likewise.