
Cambridgeshire County Council

24112 Soft Market Test

The supply of vehicles to support Passenger Transport Delivery

JANUARY 2025

1. General Requirements

- 1.1. Cambridgeshire County Council (Authority) is publishing this document for the purpose to briefly explain to suppliers the business and technical requirements and the expected scope of a supplying vehicles for Passenger transport service in order that suppliers can explain the relevance of products, services and their experience to the requirements.
 - 1.2. The Authority is in the early stages of developing a proposal for the formal procurement of Vehicle Supply Services. These services would be tailored to meet complex needs and support the delivery of Passenger Transport Services. The Authority is seeking input from the market to explore the most attractive ways to package and scope this future procurement opportunity.
 - 1.3. This exercise will also provide an opportunity for the Authority to obtain insight into how potential providers might approach the delivery of the service in question. It also gives useful early insight into the likely level of interest in a proposed project from that market.
 - 1.4. Potential participants will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to this soft market testing. Potential participants must also note that a response to this request does not guarantee an invitation to participate in this or any future procurement that Cambridgeshire County Council may conduct, nor that Cambridgeshire County Council will procure any such supply and services or accepts any proposals offered. Any procurement of the supply and services by Cambridgeshire County Council will be carried out strictly in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 (Procurement regulations)
 - 1.5. Suppliers can find out more about the Authority's tender process, role and strategies via the [Supplying to the Council](#) webpage.
 - 1.6. The Authority as produced an online MS FORMS questionnaire for interested parties to complete. Interested parties, if they have expressed willingness, may be invited to speak with the project team to explore the different options and opportunities.
 - 1.7. **Please note:** this market testing exercise is **not** an invitation to tender or a request for formal expressions of interest. This document does not form any part of an invitation to tender. The Authority is issuing this request for **information only**. Any supplier invited to present to Authority is doing so to support market research only and to help make any potential procurement process more focused and efficient. No supplier selection or supplier preference is implied.
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2. Soft Market Test Timetable

- 2.1. Please read this document and if you feel that your organisation is able to contribute to this exercise, please click on this link <https://forms.office.com/e/JmwfsTivfs> and complete by 14th February 2025
- 2.2. If you wish to send any case studies or examples which may assist, email these to procurementandcommerical@cambridgeshire.gov.uk – with the reference '24112 Supply of vehicles for Passenger transport Project'
- 2.3. Potential responders will not be prejudiced in any future procurement processes by either responding or not responding to this soft market test exercise.

3. Confidentiality and Freedom of Information (FOI)

- 3.1. **Please note:** all information included in this Soft Market Testing is confidential and only for the recipients' knowledge. No information included in this document or in discussions connected to it may be disclosed to any other party without prior written authorisation.
- 3.2. All responses will be treated confidentially. However, please be aware that we are subject to the disclosure requirements of the FOI Act and that potentially any information we hold is liable to disclosure under that Act. For this reason, we strongly advise that any information you consider to be confidential is labelled as such. In the event that a request is subsequently made for disclosure under FOI the request will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Authority provides county-wide services to all its citizens, has numerous statutory responsibilities, including in respect of the provision of education, and supports blue light services, the health sector, charities, and other local Authorities.
- 4.2. Please see website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- 4.3. To deliver on these the Authority is working under our Strategic Framework 2023-2028.
- 4.4. See link for further details - [Business Plan Section 1 - Strategic Framework - 2023-28](#)
- 4.5. The Passenger Transport Team provide transport services to all eligible young people and adults living in the County. Working closely with educational, social care and adult service colleagues to give vulnerable young people and older people the opportunities for life-long learning whether at school, college or in social environments.

Section 2: Identification of Requirement

5. Current Situation

- 5.1. The Authority currently operates a diverse fleet of 25 wheelchair accessible vehicles and employed drivers, dedicated to efficiently transporting vulnerable service users to numerous venues and events throughout the county. Please see our current Fleet composition accompanying this document.
- 5.2. As we strive to achieve our net zero targets, it is essential that we gain a comprehensive understanding of the costs associated with our vehicles, including maintenance, running expenses, and overall utilisation. This focus will ensure both operational efficiency and value for money. In recent years, we have undertaken several reviews aimed at enhancing the quality and sufficiency of our services. Through these efforts, we have identified exciting opportunities to innovate our vehicle arrangements to better meet our corporate objectives and fulfil service demand.
- 5.3. To develop and implement a well-informed and effective strategy, we are eager to engage with the market through this soft market exercise. By exploring the range of available products and understanding their accessibility, we can position ourselves for a sustainable and impactful future.
- 5.4. The Authority is committed to continuing this service by leveraging the benefits of fleet vehicles to achieve our goals and uphold our social values. We firmly believe that the diversity within the market and the expertise available in the private sector will help us develop the best strategy to elevate our fleet management to the next level.
- 5.5. Our fleet currently operates sparsely across Cambridgeshire, primarily serving the adult population. However, we recognize that there is an opportunity for better utilization of our vehicles, which would enhance efficiency and provide better value for money in alignment with our other objectives.
- 5.6. The Authority is eager to understand the costs associated with reducing or eliminating its Tier 1 carbon emissions by 2035. We are interested in exploring new technologies and green innovations as we work towards achieving net zero emissions, along with the potential costs involved in this transition
- 5.7. Additionally, we would like to assess the expenses and challenges related to converting our current fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) or other alternative fuel solutions that could help us meet our targets.
- 5.8. We also seek to hear your vision and approach regarding this goal and idea how we could achieve this together.

6. Our Requirements

6.1. The Authority requires a suitable and flexible supply solution. We are open to considering a finance lease agreement, a contract hire agreement, a hire purchase agreement, a flexible contract, fleet management or other proposed solution. Our primary aim with this procurement is to empower the successful realization of our ambitions.

6.2. We are looking for a solution that will:

- Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes
- Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable
- People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs
- Allow officers to manage the size of the fleet to address demand and support best practice in fleet management and fleet utilisation.
- Ensure that the quality of the products offered meet high industry standards.
- Provide reliable and robust service delivery solutions to mitigate any down time related to maintenance/breakdown
- Provide value for money.
- Provide a tailored approach to vehicle arrangements to meet our strategic goals.
- Be compliant with all regulatory and industry bodies).
- Provide access to the vehicles on flexible terms and conditions. This could be either a Hire or a Lease arrangement, or other delivery model.
- Provide statistics/data on vehicle utilisation and running costs to support efficiency and best practice in fleet management.
- Provide a contractual mobilisation time to increase the number of vehicles and a flexible method of reducing the number of vehicles under the contract.
- Safety equipment and any other fittings that would support quality, safety and best practice.

7. Social Value

7.1. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental wellbeing in connection with public service contracts, and for connected purposes.

7.2. The Authority is keen to see how it could be possible to include social value as part of all its procurement opportunities which may form part of the overall Award criteria where appropriate.

7.3. Please note that any social value commitments should be appropriate to the local area. For the Authority 'local' is defined as being within the Cambridgeshire boundary area.

7.4. The Authority shall be actively encouraging bidders who share their commitment to proactively deliver additional social value within Cambridgeshire outside of any core requirements within the specification.

7.5. The Authority are currently working on the implementation of the Match My Project online portal to support their delivery of place based Social Value. Match My Project will be where businesses can find, and support Cambridgeshire based community and other related projects.

- 7.6. Please note that the platform will there to support the delivery of Social Value but that other outcomes could be included within process.
- 7.7. Please see the main [Match my project](#) website to see where the Cambridgeshire portal will be once it is in launched in 2025.
- 7.8. In addition, there are some videos:
- 7.8.1. An Introduction to Match My Project for Community Organisations - [MMP intro for Community Orgs](#)
 - 7.8.2. An Introduction to Match My Project for Supply-Chain - [MMP intro for Businesses](#), How to post Job and Training Opportunities to Match My Project (Supply-Chain Partners only)
 - 7.8.3. [How to post a job](#) which shows the Match My Project user journey for businesses, including signing up and finding projects to support, getting started on a project, and giving feedback on the Match My Project platform for your information.
- 7.9. The document “Cambridgeshire Social Value Links” is also included as part of this soft market document suite.