

INVITATION TO SUBMIT AN Expression Of Interest:

**Management and Operation of a new
Cycle and Visitor Hub**

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Introduction:

Rossendale Council is seeking Expressions of Interests from suitably qualified interested partners for the “Management and Operation of a new Cycle and visitor hub” around the Futures Park area, Bacup. This may be extended in the future by negotiation to include further hubs around the borough particularly within the three designated town centres.

Background:

Rossendale is in the South Pennines, in the heart of East Lancashire and is only a stone’s throw from Leeds and Manchester.

It is known locally for its mix of town centre living in a beautiful, rural setting, with friendly communities and an abundance of heritage. The area boasts three market towns, each with their own identity, promoting independent boutique shops, artisans, heritage, arts and culture.

Rossendale’s unique landscape lends itself as an opportunity to attract walkers, riders, bikers and nature lovers and already it is home to well-known bike trails and events, a dry ski slope, several outdoor sculptures on the hillsides, pony trekking, off-roading to name just a few.

Rossendale Council has recently developed a Draft Visitor Economy Strategy which draws on 5 key themes for growth over the next 10 years, including:

1. Marketing Rossendale
2. Outdoor Rossendale
3. Lifestyle Rossendale
4. Accommodation Rossendale
5. Creative Rossendale

The draft Visitor Economy Strategy is due to be adopted by Council in December 2021 following extensive stakeholder consultation with work progressing on the key actions identified. It is available to view here: <https://www.visitrossendale.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FINALX.pdf>

One of the key themes of the strategy is Outdoor Rossendale that focuses on its strong cycling, walking and horse riding offer. In order to increase the experience and expenditure gained from the outdoor assets, Rossendale Council is developing a major outdoor project, an element of which includes a brand new cycle and visitor hub facility which will be accessed by people using (but not limited to) Lee Quarry,



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the Valley of Stone Greenway and Stubbylee Pump track. Longer term aspirations are for a series of connected cycle and visitor hubs across the borough.

Rossendale Council is now seeking EOI's from interested partners in this opportunity to manage and operate the new build facility.

About the proposed cycle and visitor hub facility:

- The new build is expected to include a cafe, bike and boot hire, changing rooms, toilets, meeting spaces, car parking, bike improvement activities (such as lessons etc), workshop spaces and bike washes
- The centre will be a hub of information, with walking route and bike trail details clearly visible and will be open on most days.
- The cycle and visitor hub will have a significant presence in the cycling, walking, running and horse riding community

The Business Model

- Rossendale Council will provide the land to develop the facility
- Rossendale Council will seek to lead the capital development of the Cycle and visitor Centre using its own or secured external funding; a Joint Venture type mix of commercial/ private funding would also be considered.
- Rossendale Council will build the facility with an appointed design team, including a QS, Project Manager and Architect. The Partner Organisation appointed to run the facility will have opportunity to feed into the new build design process
- Rossendale Council will seek funding to upgrade and rank the cycle/walking, running and horse riding trails in the vicinity of the Cycle and visitor hub in the Lee Quarry area along with other appropriate projects
- The Partner organisation is expected to lease the building from Rossendale Council over a long term period under prior agreed HOTs, including an annual management fee
- The partner organisation will need to develop an appropriate business plan that shows how the facilities revenue will be maximised to attract a high number of visitors through regular events and promotion of the facilities through advertising, signage and media. It is also hoped that strong partnerships can be formed with local interested cycling, walking, running and horse riding groups with their use of the facility encouraged with volunteering opportunities maximised. The facility should also link into the Council's Rossendale Works employability and volunteering project where possible.

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- The successful operator will be responsible on behalf of the Council in Lee Quarry and the centre to; monitor and report bad users such as motor bikes, maintain trails, stewarding events, signage, litter collection and preserve historic buildings etc. This will be funded through the ring fenced % of turnover but will need to be co-ordinated and overseen by the operator, ideally using interested volunteer stakeholder groups where possible.
- A percentage to be negotiated of turnover on an open book basis will be provided to Rossendale Council annually and this will be ring-fenced to be reinvested into maintaining the trails, historic buildings and car parking facilities etc.
- Rossendale Council will monitor footfall at the site on a quarterly basis and any agreed management agreement targets
- Further sites in the borough are expected to follow a similar model but would require the agreement of both partners before going ahead and the Council reserves the right to run a new ITT specific to these sites if a mutual agreement cannot be found.

Invitations for Expression of Interest

Companies interested in tendering for the “Partner Organisation to run a Cycle and visitor hub” are invited in the first instance to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI).

The Expression of Interest must answer the following:

1. Name and address of Partner applying for the opportunity
2. Previous experience of a similar model or work within the sector.
NB: If you have no previous experience of a similar model, please outline why you wish to apply for this opportunity and how you can add value. (No more than 2 sides of A4). Please also detail the likely business model that you would like to see developing at the site.
(No more than 1 side of A4)
3. Photograph's, website links, referee details and anything you feel is relevant to support your application are encouraged as part of the submission
4. Indication of any capital investment offered to support the development

The expression of interest must be submitted to the following email address **ONLY** tenders@rossendalebc.gov.uk by **9am on Friday 11th December 2020** – **TITLE SHOULD STATE – EOI CYCLE AND VISITOR HUB** .



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Any clarifications to be submitted to Megan Eastwood in writing by Wednesday 2nd December 2020: meganeastwood@rossendalebc.gov.uk

A zoom open briefing session will be offered to all interested parties on 1st December @ 2pm- 3:30pm – zoom link will be sent to all interested parties. This will provide an opportunity to collectively hear the Council's vision and answer any technical questions that you may have. Please register your interest in this session by email: economicdevelopment@rossendalebc.gov.uk with the subject: EOI – Cycle and Visitor Hub.

Conditions

- The Expression of Interest does not commit Rossendale Council to award a contract. The aim is to promote discussion opportunities with potential partners
- Rossendale Council will maintain strict confidentiality in receipt of the EOI's including clarifications and other submissions during the process
- Rossendale Council will review and score EOI's by Monday 21st December. 100% of the scoring will be weighted on point 2. Suitable applicants will be invited to a series of interviews on site to discuss the business model and finance elements in more detail of the above and you will be notified if shortlisted within a few weeks of closing.
- A second formal ITT will follow for those qualifying from the EOI round 1 stage that will require a detailed vision, business plan, lease agreement yield, cash flow accounting targets with % open book revenue charge rate, marketing and advertising plan, management of the sites plan, volunteering plan and management targets. It is expected that the second stage will be concluded around February 2021 with the successful operator chosen March 2021 based upon a best value assessment.
- Rossendale Council cannot reimburse any costs associated in the development of your EOI and second stage submission.