

**Tender for:**

**Quotes for Website Development, Hosting, Support & Maintenance**

**Introduction**

**About Dunstable Town Council**

The Town Council's current website was launched in 2018 and has served the council and the community well. However, the Council recognises that the website needs to be updated and improved to meet the changing needs and expectations of its users, as well as to comply with the latest accessibility standards and security best practices.

Dunstable Town Council is therefore seeking from suppliers a quote for the provision of a new website, hosting, maintenance and ongoing support.

The closing date for submissions is: 12.00 noon - 26 August 2024.

The website specification is stated in this document and has a defined list of minimum requirements the service must meet in order to ensure that the Council achieves both legally required compliance and communication functions.

The supplier must be experienced in providing websites and ongoing support to town councils and have a proven track record and understanding of all requirements relating to a council’s website. Specifically in regard to the accessibility compliance requirements (currently WCAG2.1AA raising to WCAG2.2AA in October 2024). In addition, the supplier must have experience and an understanding of the publishing requirements and techniques for local government organisations.

This document contains details of how to submit a bid, the nature of the contract and the timelines that the successful bidder will need to work to.

Please contact info@dunstable.gov.uk if you have any questions or require any clarification.

**About the Supplier**

The Town Council’s domain is .gov.uk; therefore, it’s preferable that the supplier be accredited by the CDDO (Cabinet Digital Data Office) and authorised and be Cyber Essentials Certified. The Council’s domain is hosted by Cloudflare.

The Council’s IT systems are based on Microsoft 365. Any solution must be compatible with this system and the Council email hosting service and must have insurance cover against cyber-attack, data loss and GDPR failures.

**Background**

Dunstable Town Council was formed in 1985, located in Bedfordshire. Dunstable is one of the country’s largest town councils and is the most local tier of local government, positioned within Central Bedfordshire Council. The council consists of 18 councillors who represent five wards and serve a population of over 40,000 people. The council is responsible for providing various services and facilities for the town, such as parks, cemeteries, allotments, markets, community events, civic awards, grants, and consultations. The council also works in partnership with other organisations to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Dunstable and its residents.

**Tender Introduction**

Organisations wishing to reply to this tender must fully read this document including the separate Appendix sections. The organisation must fill in the forms and tables within **Appendix B** of this tender.

In **Appendix B, Part 4** the organisation must submit a **detailed proposal** on how they will meet the following as detailed below:

* Core Objectives
* Scope of Work
* Key requirement & functionality
* Hosting, domain & support
* Training
* Maintenance
* User Experience and Navigation

**In addition to Appendix B, Part 4 the organisation must also submit:**

* A proposed project plan and timeline that outlines the key stages, deliverables and milestones of the website development, hosting, and support process.
* Any other relevant supporting information.
* A proposed website design and layout that demonstrates the tenderer's understanding of the council's requirements, preferences, and values. Please note, the Council is likely to launch a new council brand in October 2024 and the proposed solution will need to be flexible to reflect this.

**The core objectives are:**

* To provide the Town Council with a new website.
* To transfer all content from old to new website where possible and to include full document transfer for meeting-related pages dating from 2022 to date (along with a solution for making older agendas and minutes available).
* The Town Council is currently working with Cloudy IT, our IT service provider, to develop a Decisions service which enables Council agendas and minutes to be created within Microsoft 365.
* Create new pages and add new content according to the agreed sitemap.
* Ensure the website fully meets the legally required Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG2.1AA, raising to WCAG 2.2 AA from October 2024 and the supplier maintains compliance for the framework moving forward with any future changes to the regulations for the life of the contract.

* Design the website with scalability in mind to accommodate future growth for additional pages & content. Consideration to potential future development upgrades should also be considered in terms of the use of open-source code so that future functionality is not restrictive by a proprietary system.
* The website must be built with best practice Search Engine Optimise SEO-friendly.
* The council’s audience will be predominantly using a mobile phone to experience the site. Design and features should be mobile-friendly and fully responsive, performing well on all devices, including desktops, tablets, and smartphones.
* Website works consistently across different web browsers to ensure cross-browser compatibility
* The Town Council will take responsibility for updating the website. Training must be provided before the new website launches with on-going support. Provide ongoing advice to the Town Council regarding good practices for ALT tags, file naming, URL structure when creating pages, and key-word meta descriptions.
* Ensure Google Analytics (GA4) is set up correctly to support the Marketing and Communications Officer to gather insights for reports.
* Ensure, where possible, the Town Council still ranks in Google for ‘What’s in Dunstable’ at the top of the page, as well maintain other pages that are ranking well in Search Engine Result Pages SERPs. The council appreciates that a guarantee cannot be made for a third party’s outcome, but that best practice SEO page titling and meta data are employed.
* Assist the council in setting up and integrating a best practice online payment provider for ad-hoc payments (for event tickets, bookings and fees) through GovPay or a recommended payment gateway.
* Accessibility compliance is a legal and fundamental requirement for the council to meet with its website and the website must be natively accessible through the use of best practice coding according to WCAG rules.

**Scope of work**
* A professional, responsive and modern looking website that sets us apart from other Town Councils when it comes to the overall design, whilst ensuring the site meets our legal and publishing obligations.
* The supplier will work alongside the Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer to develop and determine a roadmap and project plan that consists of site mapping, navigation definition, signposting, page content planning, indexing & URL structures with a development schedule of work.
* A dedicated "What's On" page featuring an integrated calendar overview that displays all events and activities from each service area. A filter option for users to select specific months or select events by service area/category. For reference: <https://www.grovetheatre.co.uk/theatre-performances>

A filtered version of the calendar will display on each service area’s individual pages, but only showcasing their own dedicated events and activities. I.e the Town Centre service page, will display only options such as Street Food Heroes, Middle Row Markets, Vegan Markets, Event Market, and Partnership Events, which are relevant to that service.

* The ability to add online tickets for events and to define ticket types, availability, prices and to integrate into a payment gateway.
* A custom-built booking system that can cater for each service area’s requirements as defined below

Or

Ability to host 3rd Party platform that offers the same capabilities.

**Priory House Afternoon Tea - Booking system requirements:**

* A booking system showcasing afternoon tea availability with a full calendar overview of each month, dates and times. Afternoon teas take place between 12 pm and 3 pm Monday to Saturday. Times shown will be every 30 minutes and only display available slots.
* Ability for admin controllers to edit the availability for each month
* When booking, provide a function for the user to define how many adults and children (under 12) are part of the booking.
* Full payment through GovPay or payment gateway - (with a 48-hour cancellation period required)
* An option to select variable aspects of the afternoon tea (standard, vegetarian, children’s)
* An option for customer to declare if there any food intolerances or allergies
* Details of booking confirmation sent to Priory House email address and also details stored on the back end of website and a confirmation sent to the user
* A reminder via email or text to customers about their upcoming booking 2 days before
* On the Afternoon tea page, there would need to be an option for users to purchase a Gift Voucher online with the users being sent an e-ticket attached via email to confirm their purchase.

**Priory House Venue Hire - Booking system requirements:**

* Currently Priory House is going through a restoration. In the future, there could be potential where we would need to have an option to be able to consider enquiring booking room hire for the Jacobean room for occasions such as baby showers, wakes and special birthdays. Therefore, a designed based landing page with a form-based enquiry method is recommended.

**Grove Corner Venue Hire - Booking system requirements:**

* A booking system showcasing availability for main hall hire or consultation room for dates and times in a calendar overview
* Users would only be able to submit a booking request by filling out a form with their contact details and a drop down option filter where they need to state if it is for community/charity or commercial bases.
* The Council needs to have the flexibility to block out times if we need to utilise the space on ad-hoc basis.

**Grove Corner events and activities – Booking system requirements:**

* Provide a single set of contact details for parents/careers, allowing the option to include information about multiple children associated with that primary contact.
* Ability to add tickets, either paid or FREE for certain activities and events on the created page
* Tick box under each child/person’s name for given permission for photo consent, allergies etc.
* Back office must show details or email notification must sent to service area about who has booked onto the event, so we can correlate who is present on the day.

**Older People’s Lunch Club - Booking system requirements:**

* A place for people to register as a member of the Older People’s Lunch Club.
* Members/career’s/family members can pre-book a set session or a number of sessions in advance online.
* Ability to cancel a pre-booked session and have it credited to their account
* Ability to set cancellation periods
* Email notification to show details of who has booked on and who has cancelled, so we can correlate who is present on the day.

**Splash Park Café – Booking system requirements:**

* A booking system showcasing availability for the Splash Park café venue hire
* Users would only be able to submit a booking request by filling out a form submission with their contact details
* A second booking form for enquiring about gazebo and party hire and deals.

**Other key requirements and functionality:**

* Dunstable Town Council will be launching new branding in the autumn which will need form part of the new look and feel of the overall design.
* Payment method where invoices can be paid directly from the website using GovPay or recommended payment gateway.
* The Council currently uses WordPress and the proposed solution should be based on WordPress or a similar solution. There will be different officers within the council using the website from a beginner to immediate level, so creating pages and updating the website need to be made as accessible as possible through the deployment of preformatted pages to ensure consistency and reduce admin time.
* Ensure the social media icons are integrated into the website, alongside integrating social media icons that link to services areas are link on their service area dedicated pages
* Design features and website pages for service areas to match their branding to maintain consistency, so they look like micro sites.
* A well-designed range of layouts for core council communication tasks, such as meeting documents, financial information, councillors’ profiles and other, key publishing requirements all councils must publish.
* Optimise the website for quick-loading pages to improve user experience and SEO.
* A search functionality that provides a results page that categorises the results into relevant matches alongside recommended information.
* Integrate sign-up points on the website for users to subscribe to the brand new Council newsletter. Additionally, support and set up the integration of the e-newsletter via a third-party email platform, i.e. the mailing list is set up correctly and complies with GDPR regulations and are securely managed.
* Provide advice to the Marketing and Communications Officer to help them ensure content is optimised to make it easier for residents to find relevant information and for search engine ranking.
* Integrated forms functionality to enable us to capture user information, whilst remaining GDPR compliant and fully accessible.
* The system will provide an emergency message display system for use in situations, such as the death of a monarch, security announcements or other such town-wide messages that need to be displayed quickly and easily on the website
* Https implementation and full cyber essentials certification.
* Chatbot functionality to answer FAQ and queries about DTC or signpost to alternative Town Council’s such as Central Beds.
* Potentially to incorporate interactive hover animations or scrolling-triggered animations to make the website fun and engaging for users.
* The ability to match the design of an event page to reflect the overall look and feel of the event i.e, easy to change the colour of the header / change the picture.

**Hosting, domain & support:**

* The host space of the website must use SSL to secure data transmission and be located in the UK.
* Verify that the website complies with relevant legal requirements, such as GDPR and other relevant (UK) data protection laws.
* Ensure that backup procedures are in place and functioning correctly to prevent data loss.
* All admin user controls to have 2fa security access to elevate the security of the website systems.
* Work with the Corporate Marketing and Communications officer to conduct usability testing with real users to gather feedback on the website’s ease of use, navigation, and overall user experience.
* Ensure analytics tracking codes (e.g., Google Analytics, Tag Manager) are correctly installed and functioning.
* Final review and launch preparation, including a soft launch to identify remaining issues
* Work with the Corporate Marketing and Communications officer on the testing phase before the soft launch of the website including testing different web browsers and multiple devices to confirm it is fully responsive and has consistent performance and appearance. Test the navigation menus and Functionality Testing such as links and forms.

The website must have minimum browser compatibility with the following versions and newer: Chrome (Version 87 and above), Edge (version 88 and above) and Safari 13+.

* The supplier will be located the UK and have a UK base of operations and assure no data will leave the United Kingdom jurisdiction.

**Training & Ongoing support:**

* To provide full website admin training on site or online for relevant staff, including opportunities for them to try and practice new procedures for using the website.
* To provide access to ongoing training aids, such as a video-based tutorials for the website functions for self-service support and tuition.
* Provide support by phone, email and video call according to an agreed SLA (Service Level Agreement) and access to council sector publishing experts for advice and guidance.
* Provider to share quarterly reports on works carried out e.g. updates, recommendations and ongoing guidance and checking on accessibility compliance issues.

**Maintenance of the finished website:**

* The supplier will provide a strong security element to the maintenance plan, including upgrades as and when they become available and protection from known methods of attack.
* The supplier will deploy domain DNS DDOS protection through the use of nameserver protection.
* Where, for security reasons, the website should be updated to a more current form of code, this must be raised and discussed promptly with the Council.
* Maintenance plan must include on-going support that includes trouble shooting of any issues encountered by staff or customers while using the site and support to add and customise additional plugins and features as and when required by the Town Council.
* The supplier will provide ongoing guidance and training on best practice accessibility publishing techniques to support current and successive team members.

**User Experience (UX) and Navigation:**

The new Dunstable Town Council website should balance a user experience (UX) and accessibility to ensure fully inclusive use and the navigation flow is intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to a diverse audience. Please consider when designing the user experience and navigation for our council website:

* **Clear Information Architecture:**

Logical Structure: Organise information logically, with a clear hierarchy. Ensure that users can easily understand the main sections and their relationships.

* **User-Centric Design:**

Understandable Language: Use plain and understandable language, avoiding jargon or complex terminology. The content should be accessible to a broad audience.

* **Clear Calls to Action (CTAs):**

Intuitive CTAs: Use clear and concise calls to action that guide users on what steps to take next. For example, "July Newsletter," "Report an Issue," or "Find Your Councillor."

* **Community Engagement:**

Interactive Features: Incorporate features that encourage community engagement, such as feedback forms, or community event calendars.

* **Up-to-Date Information**:

Dynamic Content: Keep content up to date, especially information that changes frequently, such as news updates, events, and announcements.

* **Visual Hierarchy:**

Emphasise Important Information: Use visual hierarchy to draw attention to important information.

* **Intuitive Navigation:**

Simple Menus: Keep navigation menus simple and straightforward. Avoid overwhelming users with too many options. Use dropdown menus when needed providing this works well on mobile devices.

* **User Journeys:**

Defined Paths: Identify common user journeys and ensure that users can easily navigate through these paths. For example, a resident looking for minutes of meetings, or a visitor exploring local attractions.

* **Feedback Mechanisms:**

User Feedback: Provide mechanisms for users to provide feedback, report issues, or ask questions.

* **Transparency:**

Clear Policies and all regulatory information: Clearly communicate council policies, procedures, meetings and documents in accordance with Public Body and Council publishing requirements. Make important documents easily accessible and understandable.

**Acknowledgements**

The Council acknowledges that this is an ambitious brief and set of requirements and would expect the supplier to make the council aware of potential issues or concerns as a result of a requirement being in contravention or conflict with either best practice or compliance and to provide both guidance and advice in these circumstances.

The council also recognises that the brief may contain features or functionality that are best supplied in partnership with another specialist provider.

**Contingency considerations**

The council recognises that a certain level of contingency in terms of budget may be need as an ongoing aspect to support unknown requirements. The council would welcome best advice on how the potential supplier would plan for this.

**Instructions and Information on the Tender Document and Process**

These instructions are designed to ensure that all tender responses are given equal and fair consideration. It is important therefore that you provide all the information in the format and order specified. Please contact info@dunstable.gov.uk if you have any questions. Pre-tender negotiations are not permitted.

**Contract Period**

The contract will be for three years with an extension to the contract up to a further two years, subject to satisfactory performance and by mutual agreement.

DTC expect to reach a provisional decision on the award of the contract by 20 September 2024. The successful bidder will provisionally be required to commence work from 30 September.

**Incomplete Tender Documents**

Tender responses may be rejected if the information asked for is incomplete or proven to be inaccurate.

**Receipt of Tender Documents**

The completed tender form must be posted, in a sealed envelope, and marked

Website Development & Support Tender for the attention of the Town Clerk & Chief

Executive, or emailed to accounts@dunstable.gov.uk with subject ‘Website

Development & Support Tender to arrive no later than **12 noon** **on 26 August 2024.**

Those received before the due date will be retained until then. It is the responsibility of the submitter to ensure that their document is received no later than the appointed time.

By issuing this invitation the Council is not bound in any way to continue with the tender process.

**Inducements**

Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with the Council will disqualify your tender from being considered and may constitute a criminal offence.

**Confidentiality of Tenders**

Please note the following requirements, you must not:

* Tell anyone else what your tender price is or will be before the time limit for delivery of tenders.
* Try to obtain any information about anyone else's tender or proposed tender before the time limit for delivery of tenders.
* Make any arrangements with another organisation about whether or not they should tender, or about their or your tender price.

Failure to comply with these conditions may disqualify your tender.

**Costs and Expenses**

You will not be entitled to claim from the Council any costs or expenses which you

may incur in preparing your tender or expression of interest, whether or not your tender is successful.

**Freedom of Information**

The Council is committed to open government and to meeting their responsibilities.

under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Accordingly, all information submitted to the Council may need to be disclosed in response to a request under the Act. If you

consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. You should be aware that, even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, we may still be required to disclose it under the Act if a request is received. Please also note that the receipt of any material marked ‘confidential’ or equivalent by the Council should not be taken to mean that we accept any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, we may also be required to disclose details of unsuccessful tenders or expressions of interest.

**Tender Scoring**

Each tender response will be evaluated against an agreed scoring method. The

scoring method is shown in Appendix A of this document.

**Conclusions**

Whilst every endeavour has been made to give tenderers an accurate description of

the Council’s requirement, tenderers should make their own assessment about the

methods and resources needed to meet those requirements.

**Tender Timeline**

The tender process timeline is outlined below. All dates are subject to change.

Please note based on scoring organisations will be invited to present in front of a panel where a Q&A will be conducted after the presentation.

The successful organisation will be selected from the organisations asked to present to the panel.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tender Docs Issued  |  2 August 2024 |
| Deadline For Clarifications  |  16 August 2024 |
| Deadline for Submissions  |  12.00 - 26 August 2024 |
| Invitations to Presentations Issued  |  w/c 2 September 2024 |
| Presentations Held  |  9 September 2024 |
| Decision Made on Appointment and Communicated  |  20 September 2024 |
| Standstill Period  |  21 September – 27 September 2024 |
| Chosen Supplier Confirmed  |  30 September 2024 |
| Planned Website Launch & Hosting |  1 May 2025 |

The Council withholds the right to enter final commercial negotiations with the successful organisation before signing contracts.

**Compliance**

All bidders are expected to confirm they comply with the following legislation/standards and to provide proof upon request:

* Equality Act 2010
* General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018 preferably via an Information Security Policy that reflects the control objectives as specified within the ISO27001 control set.

**Outline of Council Requirements**

Dunstable Town Council has outlined below the high-level requirements for the contract. This will enable organisations to determine if they wish to submit a tender.

Dunstable Town Council wants prospective suppliers to provide solutions that meet these requirements based on their experience of working with similar organisations and understanding of the available solutions in the market.

The Council is willing to review any solution put forward if it meets the basic requirements outlined below. Please ensure all solutions have a proven track record, are commercially viable and fully supported by yourselves.