**INVITATION TO QUOTE / TENDER GUIDANCE**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (hereafter referred to as “The Authority”) is submitting to tender its requirements for the supply of Network and Server Resilience Services. The minimum practical number of suppliers will be selected to undertake this work. suppliers are now being formally invited to meet these requirements and the purpose of this document is to provide the necessary information and guidance to suppliers.

All potential respondents receiving this Invitation to Tender (“ITT”) are hereinafter referred to as “Supplier”.

**PROCUREMENT POLICY**

It is The Authority’s policy to reduce current and future business costs wherever possible.

The cost benefits must be economically justifiable ***after*** the objectives for Products/Services have been met. Individual suppliers’ overall operations will be considered in determining which response is the most appropriate for the Authority’s needs.

**LIABILITY**

The Authority shall incur no obligation or liability whatsoever to anyone by issuance of the ITT or action by any party relative hereto.

**TERMS OF VALIDITY**

All Responses must be valid for a minimum of ***90 days*** from the tender response date.

**QUESTIONS/CLARIFICATION**

suppliers are under an obligation to ask questions and/or clarify any issues, which they do not fully understand or believes may be interpreted in more than one way. The Authority will attempt to answer all questions from suppliers; however, the Authority is not required to do so. To ensure consistent interpretation of the ITT all clarification statements will be made available in writing to all suppliers.

The Authority reserves the right, at its discretion, to conduct meetings/discussions with responding suppliers at any time during the ITT process.

Questions / clarifications should be issued to the Authority in accordance with the tender program, by sending an e-mail to tenders@rbfrs.co.uk. The ITT Project Number and Title should be referenced in the email subject line.

The Authority will, at its own discretion, endeavour to respond to suppliers within the tender program date. All questions and requests for clarification or further information, and corresponding responses, maybe circulated to all suppliers subject to the following provisions:

* When submitting a question or request for clarification for further information, suppliers should indicate whether or not they believe the question or request for clarification or further information is commercially sensitive or confidential to them. This should be done through marking the question or request for clarification or further information **“confidential – not to be circulated to other suppliers”**
* If the Authority considers that, in the interests of open and fair competition, it is unable to respond to the question, or request for clarification for further information on a confidential basis it will inform the Supplier who has submitted it. The Supplier must as soon as practicable thereafter respond in writing requesting that either the query be withdrawn or treated as not confidential or commercially sensitive. The Authority will deem that the question or request for clarification or further information has been withdrawn if the Authority is not contacted in writing within 3 working days following their informing the Supplier as referred to above.

**CONDITIONS/ASSUMPTIONS**

The Supplier is required to clearly explain any assumptions or conditions it imposes on or includes in its response to this ITT.

**PREPARATION OF TENDER**

The information contained within this ITT should be regarded as a statement of the Authority’s current position as it is able to determine at this time. Supplier’s must at their own expense carefully examine and consider the ITT documents and satisfy themselves of the appropriateness and validity of the information provided. In submitting a tender, suppliers shall be deemed to have read and understood all the contents of the ITT Documents.

**RESPONSE CONVENTIONS**

All suppliers should follow the following conventions when assessing compliance to the documentation of the invitation to tender.

* **Complies -** Supplier’s product or service completely satisfies the stated condition or need.
* **Partially Complies -** Supplier’s product or service only partially satisfies the stated condition or need. **Does not Comply** - Supplier’s product/service does not satisfy any part of the stated condition or Supplier does not or cannot provide the services needed.
* **Noted** - where a clause only provides general information.

**RESPONSES TO TENDER**

All suppliers shall submit their tender responses in accordance with the following criteria

* Responses must be submitted as follows:

One signed hard copy to be addressed to:
The Chief Fire Officer

C/o Mr Billy Allen – Head of Procurement

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Newsham Court

Calcot

Reading

RG31 7SD

One electronically copy on CD / Memory Stick. To be clearly marked with Supplier’s name.

* The Authority’s logo, trademarks and other identifying marks are proprietary and may not be incorporated in Supplier’s response without The Authority’s written permission.
* The Supplier should clearly reference the ITT on its response and any related correspondence.
* Responses received after the due date may not be considered and may be returned unopened.

**NON-CONFORMING AND UNSUCCESSFUL RESPONSES**

Responses must be complete in all respects. Responses with deviations in format or not meeting specified requirements, including response deadlines, may be disqualified. Responses must be signed by duly authorised representative(s) of the Supplier.

The Authority will notify each Supplier in writing as soon as possible whether it has been successful. The Authority will notify all suppliers if they have been successful or not. For un-successful suppliers the Authority will advise the evaluation score and place ranking within the adjudication process. At its discretion, the Authority may conduct debriefings for those suppliers whose responses were unsuccessful.

**DISPOSITION OF RESPONSES**

Response openings will be conducted privately. All materials submitted in response to this ITT will become the Authority’s property and may be retained by the Authority.

**SUPPLIER QUALIFICATIONS**

During the time the Authority is evaluating responses, the Supplier should be prepared to demonstrate that it can meet all the proposed requirements detailed herein. The Authority or its representative shall have the right to conduct a supplier audit to verify supplier’s ability to meet the requirements of this ITT.

**SUPPLIER’S COST**

Any costs incurred by the Supplier in responding to this ITT or in support of activities associated with the response to this ITT, are to be borne by the Supplier and are not reimbursable by the Authority.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

It is the Authority’s objective to obtain the best goods and services possible by giving fair and impartial consideration to all suppliers invited to submit a Response. Every potential Supplier will be evaluated on a fair and equal basis. Suppliers will be given the same information and treated equally with respect to the selection process. The granting of any advantage to one while excluding others is not permitted.

The Authority’s employees, their families and friends, may not accept any gifts, gratuities or favours from suppliers at any time.

Any Supplier who directly or indirectly canvases any member, agent or officer of the Authority concerning the award of Contract will be disqualified.

**SUB-CONTRACTORS**

Where a supplier is proposing to sub-contract any part of the service it, must be clearly stated in all cases. The supplier shall manage and control any sub-contractor services included in their proposal and provide evidence of how they intend to control the sub-contractor(s).

 **CONTENT AND FORMAT**

This document aims to set out the specific requirements for the completed tenders. Suppliers should note

 the following:

* These instructions and guidance are designed to ensure that all suppliers are given fair and equal consideration. It is therefore important that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.
* Whilst every endeavour has been made to give suppliers an accurate description of the Authority’s requirements, suppliers should form their own conclusions about the methods and resources needed to meet those requirements.