



## **HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **INVITATION TO TENDER**

### **HEDGE AND FIELD MAINTENANCE; 2022-23**



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## Invitation To Tender Brief (ITT)

### 1. Summary Instructions and ITT Timetable

Item	Contract Details
Invitation to Tender (ITT)	Hughenden Parish Council is carrying out this procurement process for the provision of a Hedge and Field Maintenance service contract
Contract Duration:	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31st March 2024
Procuring Officer:	Any queries must be addressed to the Parish Clerk.
Date/time for Tender return:	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2023; by 12.00 noon
Notification of result of Tender evaluation	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Contract Commencement	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023

### 2. ITT Preamble

#### 2.1 Introduction

Hughenden Parish Council is seeking to award a one-year Hedge and Field Maintenance contract for much of the landholdings it manages. The Invitation to Tender is being procured under the Parish Council's open tender process; in line with the 2015 *Public Contracts Regulations*.

This document provides applicants wishing to tender for the grounds maintenance contract with the requirements, standards and conditions under which the procurement will be operated.

#### 2.2 Overview of Hughenden Parish Council

Operating as a third tier of local authority, the Parish Council provides local services (in conjunction with unitary principal authority Buckinghamshire Council). The Parish Council represents local interests; making decisions on behalf of parishioners, delivering services to meet local needs and ensuring the well-being of the community.

#### 2.3 Grounds Maintenance; Background & Objectives

The purpose of the tendered contract is to deliver a high-quality hedge and field maintenance service for Hughenden Parish Council's public open spaces.

The Parish Council currently manages five Grounds Maintenance contracts. From 2023 it will reduce this to two by developing a combined contract General Ground Maintenance for amenity sites to merge the following contracts;

- General Maintenance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Devolved Services Maintenance
- Garden of Rest Maintenance

Management of countryside sites (Hedge and Field) is being retained as a separate contract.

The Parish Council puts great value in the day-to-day management of these open spaces as a resource that all residents can enjoy. Green Spaces are a vital part of the community infrastructure; contributing in a variety of ways to the health and well-being of all that use them or enjoy their visual amenity.

The *Tender Specification* (Section A) is provided separately. This provides the necessary details and standards required to achieve the Parish Council's maintenance standards. The *Terms and Conditions* (Section B) outlines essential work pre-requisites; such as requirements, health & safety preconditions and necessary qualifications.

Value for money is essential for any local authority that is spending public money; and it will be a key attribute in determining the successful applicant for this tender.

Another important element of the tender will be provision of social value, which is based on supporting ethical criteria wherever possible. For instance, the Parish Council will favour the opportunity to use companies or contractors that can put money back into the area by providing opportunities for local employment. It is also imperative the successful applicant shows a commitment to satisfactory employment conditions and pays its staff a real living wage.

Establishing strong environmental standards and benefits are other key elements of supporting social values. Consequently, a strong focus on reducing the carbon footprint of the Parish Council's own Hedge and Field Maintenance operations will be essential.

Likewise, maintenance that supports the council's commitment to addressing the ecological emergency is an increasing focus of its grounds management requirements. Where possible, any suitable opportunity to enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats should be identified and adopted.

### **3. General Tender Information**

#### **3.1 Supervising Officer**

The main supervising officer will be the Parish Clerk.

#### **3.2 Budget**

As a guide, the estimated cost to the Parish Council for this contract will be approximately £12,000.00 per year. This available budget is exclusive of all costs and VAT.

#### **3.3 Payment**

Payment will be made monthly to the contractor on satisfactory completion of works and following receipt and verification of an invoice by the Council. Invoices should be produced monthly by the last day of the month and clearly state the agreed, scheduled payment or the cost of each individual job carried out over that period. Payment will be made by BACs.

In accordance with the 2015 *Public Procurement Contract Regulations*, the Council will pay all valid and undisputed invoices no later than 30 days from the date on which the invoice was received.

#### **3.4 Duration of Contract Term**

The Hedge and Field Maintenance contract is for a 12-month period and will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and proceed until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2024, subject to satisfactory performance.

#### **3.5 Extension Periods**

There is a variable-option to extend for a further two years (1 year; +1 year and +1 year) at the discretion of the Council and by mutual agreement of both parties.

If agreed, these two extension period options might extend for 2 x 12 months from; -

- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025
- 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

The extension notice period would be expressed working back from the then current end date.

## **4. Site Details**

### **4.1 Site Information**

Hedge cutting is required at a number of public open-space sites across the parish (see location maps. Appendix. Section C). An annual cut of grass is also required at Little Burnham Meadow and Vincent's Meadow.

All sites are public open spaces and members of the public may be present on site.

#### **4.1.1 Little Burnham Meadow**

The site comprises of an L-shaped meadow that lies on the southern edge of Hughenden Valley, just to the south of the playing fields and village hall. This 1.28ha field of chalk grassland was designated as a Local Wildlife Site in 2019 by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership.

Ideally the site should be managed as a pasture, but in the absence of grazing, the site will be cut as a meadow. This will involve cutting the site in September or early October.

#### **4.1.2 Vincent's Meadow**

This site is located off Downley Road at Naphill and is likely a remnant of the open grassland and wood-pasture than formerly characterised the adjoining Naphill Common. The grassland has some residual biodiversity interest, but the mature trees retain most wildlife value.

Pathways are cut through the grassland and the adjacent Vincent's Pond also requires hedgecutting.

#### **4.1.3 Allotments**

The Parish Council manages eight allotment sites. All of these require some hedge-cutting, including: -

- Red Lion Allotment, Common Road, Great Kingshill
- Cryers Hill Allotment, Cryers Hill Lane
- Windmill Lane Allotment, Widmer End
- Primrose Hill Allotment Widmer End
- Hughenden Valley Allotment, Whitfield Road, Hughenden Valley
- Louches Lane Allotment, Naphill
- Walters Ash Allotment, Main Road, Walters Ash
- North Dean Allotment

#### **4.1.4 Amenity Grassland**

There are two amenity fields in the parish requiring hedge-cutting;

- Primrose Hill Amenity Area, Widmer End
- The former Common Road Allotments, Great Kingshill

#### **4.1.5 Miscellaneous sites**

A number of varied locations in the parish requiring hedge-cutting;

- Great Kingshill Common

- Widmer End, Access to Cockshoot Wood & Four Ashes Field
- Naphill Utility Station
- Warrendene Road/Bramley End road island

#### **4.2. Site Plans**

Plans and maps of all areas (see Appendix Section C: Site Plans and Maps) have been included for reference. This includes maps from Buckinghamshire Council.

#### **4.3 Site Visits**

The applicant is strongly advised to make necessary site-visits prior to completing an offer to ensure knowledge of the locations involved. This includes assessing relevant conditions or features and gaining familiarity with access arrangements and detailed measurements. Such due diligence is reasonably expected in submitting a tender of this scale.

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### **5. Evaluation of Tender Offers**

#### **5.1 Evaluation of Tenders**

All tender bids will be treated equally and assessed with transparency throughout the evaluation process. The information disclosed by applicants will be used purely for the purposes of evaluation. If a bid succeeds in passing the first stage of the evaluation, it will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation methodology.

All submissions will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with the ITT and stated requirements. This is to ensure they have been completed correctly and all necessary information has been provided. Incomplete and non-compliant tenders will be rejected.

#### **5.2 Evaluation Criterion**

As indicated in section 2.3 (*Background & Objectives*), the main aim of the contract will be to deliver the highest quality maintenance service. Applicants should demonstrate their understanding of the objectives and requirements and their response must display compliance with the requirements.

The ITT provides the opportunity for Hughenden Parish Council to select the best applicant based on specific tender criteria. This enables the Parish Council to identify the bid that best meets its needs, while offering an economically favourable tender.

The evaluation criterion is assessed according to the Parish Council's weightings and calculated to give an overall comparative score out of 100. The highest scoring tender bid will be selected.

Tenders will be assessed on the basis of their value for money and quality. Value for money is based on the costs itemised in tendered bids. The quality is more complex and includes *Social Value* factors such as experience, quality of service/product, locality and environmental policies.

### **5.3 Cost Criterion**

As a local council, value for money is paramount and a Cost Matrix will be used to assess tenderer's prices against key cost criteria. The cost assessment will contribute 60% towards evaluation of tenders. This is an opportunity for the tenderer to provide a schedule of competitive rates/prices.

### **5.4 Quality Criterion**

The evaluation of Quality criteria will contribute 40% of tenders (see the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire). An Evaluation Matrix tool and a Scoring Grid will be used by the Parish Council to evaluate submitted bids; to score tenders and help identify the one that provides the best quality

#### **5.4.1 Value for Money**

As a local council, this is an essential element that comprises the itemised and aggregate price of the tender offer. The Cost Submission Form provides the opportunity to detail a schedule of competitive rates/prices for the works. The form also allows applicants to outline what measurable or demonstrable how *added value* can be offered in the tender to enhance delivery of grounds maintenance; without costing the Parish Council additional expense.

#### **5.4.2 Experience**

Recent relevant experience will be viewed favourably, particularly in applicable technical areas associated with the variety and scale of this programme of work. This might include grounds maintenance or horticultural expertise.

The ITT places significant emphasis on performance-based specifications, where skilled operatives are employed by the applicant; because they will understand the technical requirements of hedge and field maintenance.

Where possible, a list of relevant projects undertaken should be provided; with a description and relevance to the tendered project, role of the applicant, project cost and duration of the scheme.

Of particular importance is the applicant's performance in completing past contracts to the quality standards required – including the ability to undertake contracts on time, within budget and to the satisfaction of clients. This information should include the name of two contracts or projects, their completion dates and reference contact details.

The applicant should also provide evidence of the company policies and work procedures it has in place (particularly regarding employment conditions and environmental standards) to meet mandatory requirements: and what management skills and systems are in situ.

### **5.4.3 Quality of Service**

This element is relevant to all the required Parish Council criteria. There are, however, a number of specific qualitative attributes the Council will be looking for.

First and foremost, the Parish Council seeks a high-quality performance throughout the service of the contract and verification that this necessary standard will be delivered. The applicant is required to demonstrate excellent levels of care, flexibility and responsiveness. This quality also needs to be reflected in dealings or communication with the Parish Council and public.

A demonstration of the proposed methodology and approach to the work will be advantageous. The Parish Council will also favour an applicant that can adopt innovative solutions and emerging technologies in their work, while being able to display a positive response to any potential problems.

The applicant will also be required to demonstrate their capability and resources to successfully undertake the contract. This includes aspects such as plant machinery, equipment and personnel (including staff resilience and turnover).

The competence of the key professional and technical personnel (which the applicant proposes to employ on the contract) needs to be assessed. To enable this, details of the technical skills, expertise and experience of the contractor's team should be provided. Where appropriate evidence should be provided of training or continuous learning to ensure personnel have sufficient learning or qualifications.

### **5.4.4 Environmental and Social Policies**

The Parish Council is committed to setting strong environmental standards and supporting social values. Consequently, the tender offer should outline the applicant's own ethical and environmental policies or ethos to help support this.

This will include the applicant's commitment or efforts to adapt to climate change and achieve carbon reduction. Suggestions for reducing the carbon footprint of the ITT hedge and field maintenance operations will be equally advantageous including, for instance, the potential to reduce energy, fuel and pesticide use in the provision of the contract, what measures could be taken to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, and the sourcing of ethically-responsible materials.

Just as importantly, Hughenden Parish Council supports efforts to address the biodiversity emergency. The applicant should therefore highlight their ecological credentials and emphasise any opportunities identified to enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats within the maintenance schedule. The applicant should also consider the main environmental impacts associated with delivering the contract and how these can be reduced or managed.

### **5.4.5 Locality**

Geographic proximity to the parish is an important factor in so far as locality impacts the Parish Council's. This includes minimising environmental impact, promoting local business, and protecting the natural environment; close proximity to Hughenden will limit vehicular travel and significantly help reduce the carbon footprint of the contracted works.

Maintenance of the Parish Council's open spaces may at times require a nuanced and receptive approach. A local presence and ability to respond quickly is therefore also considered an important attribute of locality.

### 5.5 Evaluation Criteria and Weightings

The cost/quality ratio for this contract will be Value for money 60% /Quality 40%. Submitted Tender offers will be assessed using the following criteria and weightings: -

Evaluation Criteria and Weightings		
Category	Criteria	Weighting
Cost	Value for money	60%
Quality	Experience	10%
Quality	Quality of product or service	10%
Quality	Environmental Policies	15%
Quality	Locality	5%

To calculate the true final weighting for each element (as 40% of the evaluation process) it will be necessary to multiply the in Quality percentage results by 0.4.

For instance; a total 5% element weighting score for *Environmental Management* will provide 2% to the overall tender evaluation total (5% x 0.4). Alternatively, a total 10% element weighting score for will provide 4% (10% x 0.4) to the overall tender evaluation total.

Before being converted to weightings, each element will be scored a rating out of ten; reflecting a tender's ability to meet the non-priced Quality criteria.

## 6. Invitation to Tender Process

Hughenden Parish Council is issuing this ITT and inviting bids from applicants in response to the published contract notice.

The procedure is being procured under the Council's open tender process, in line with the 2015 *Public Contracts Regulations*. This procurement will follow a clear and transparent process, to ensure that all applicants are treated equally.

### 6.1 Indicative Timetable for Tenders and Schedule

Set out below is the indicative timetable for tendering with the key dates for this proposed procurement as follows: -

Indicative Timetable for Tenders	
Procurement Stage	Deadline
Publication of ITT advertisement (Contract Notice) in Contract Finder and local newspaper	24 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
Deadline for ITT questions/queries from prospective tenderers	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Deadline for clarification responses to be issued	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023
Deadline for receipt of completed ITT documents by the Parish Council	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2023
Evaluation Assessment and Award of Contract	7 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Ratification of Notification of Contract award to applicants	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Notification of Contract award ( <i>Contract Award Notice</i> ) to applicants	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Anticipated issue of contract to successful tender	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Date of commencement of contract	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023
Anticipated completion of contract	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024

### 6.2 Instructions for Tendering

Applicants should read these *ITT instructions*, *Specification* and *Terms & Conditions* carefully before completing the Tender documentation. Failure to comply with completion and submission requirements may result in the rejection of the Tender.

### 6.3 Enquiries

All initial enquiries should be made to the Parish Clerk by telephone on 01494 715296 or by email at [clerk@hughenden-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hughenden-pc.gov.uk).

#### **6.4 Clarification Requests**

Prospective contractors should ensure that they are completely familiar with the nature and extent of the obligations required if the tender is awarded.

If necessary, clarification-meetings and/or site visits may be arranged with the Parish Council. These should be arranged via the Parish Clerk no later than stated in the indicative timetable for tenders.

All subsequent clarification requests should be submitted by applicants to the Parish Clerk by the clarification deadline no later than one week before the closing date (as set out in the Indicative Timetable for Tenders table). These requests should clearly reference the appropriate paragraph in the ITT documentation and be aggregated rather than sent individually. The Council is under no obligation to respond to clarification requests received after the clarification deadline.

## 7. Instructions for Completion

### 7.1 Cost Submission Form and Pricing

The Cost Submission Form (see Appendix. Section E) provides the opportunity for the applicant to provide a breakdown of itemised costs to be included with the tender offer. Tenders are to be priced on an annual basis.

All costs submitted are to be presented in Pounds Sterling and consistently excluding VAT or expenses/other costs where applicable. The tender prices offered should also be firm and fixed (for any identifiable items that make up the itemised costs) for the duration of the Contract.

The breakdown of costs is vital in evaluating and comparing specific itemised costs between each tender. It will also become part of any successful contract to assess costs and any periodic payments to be made.

Applicants may modify their tender response prior to the tender submission deadline (as per the indicative timetable for tenders) by giving written notice to the Parish Council. Any modification should be clear and submitted as a complete new tender response in accordance with these ITT conditions.

Applicants are advised that the Council is not bound to accept the lowest tender submitted nor to reimburse any expense incurred during the process.

### 7.2 Pricing for Additional Services

Some items of unscheduled and variable work are identified in the specification but will not be included in the tendered price. Where this occurs, the applicant is required to provide additional pricing rates per hour or per item in the Cost Submission Form. This will not be included in the tendered price. No guarantee can be given to the particular level of additional and unscheduled work which will be awarded; rather it should simplify and speed up the process by avoiding the need for seeking further competitive quotes.

### 7.3 Variations and Additions

There will be occasions when the Parish Council might request additional work that is not identified in the specification or specified in the schedule of works. This will be carried out through a simple *Contract Amendment*. Once the applicant has agreed the scope and terms of the additional work, a confirmation will be added to the contract to reflect the extra cost & time.

Alternatively, if the contractor needs to carry out unforeseen additional work, the Parish Council can agree to this through a *Variation to Contract*. The Council will confirm acceptance by raising a *Variation Order* document containing the original contract price, variation price and new price.

#### **7.4 Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)**

The PQQ (see Appendix Section D) is used to ascertain the suitability of a contractor in relation to the requirements of the Parish Council and the ITT. It requires commercial and legal information regarding the applicant's company and some specific questions about the contract being tendered. The form includes standard questions on company details, insurance cover, financial information, relevant experience, particulars about technical or professional ability and Information about capability or capacity.

The second part of this questionnaire is also the opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate they comply with any mandatory or discretionary (such as included in the ITT evaluation criteria) requirements for the contract. Key elements include provision of social value, added value and value for money to the Parish Council. It is also where the applicant can outline their specific qualities and any other relevant information to support their tender.

#### **7.5 Form of Tender**

The Form of Tender (see Appendix Section E) is a covering document prepared by Hughenden Parish Council and signed by the applicant to indicate they understand the tender being made and accept the various terms and conditions and other requirements of participating in the exercise.

#### **7.6 Checklist of Documents**

Tenderers are required to submit the completed Checklist (see Appendix Section G) to ensure that all ITT documents required for completion have been returned with the submitted tender.

#### **7.7 Submission of Tenders and supporting documentation**

All complete tenders must be submitted by email or in writing (by 12.00 noon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023) to the Parish Council office and clearly marked '*Hughenden Hedge and Field Maintenance Tender*'.

If sent by mail (or in person), these tenders should be submitted in a sealed envelope to the Parish Council and addressed to the Parish Clerk (at Hughenden Parish Council, Council Office, The Common, Great Kingshill, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP15 6EN).

Tenders should contain all the items listed below. Each form should be a scanned version of a signed copy. No additional information should be submitted or will be considered after the submission deadline.

The following shall be provided (for completed return): -

- Section D: Cost Submission Form
- Section E: Pre-Qualification Questionnaire
- Section F: Form of Tender
- Section G: Checklist of Documents

### **7.8 Further Information**

The Parish Council may at any time request further information from applicants to verify or clarify any aspects of their tender response or other information they may have provided.

Should the applicant not provide supplementary information or clarifications by the notified deadline, the tender offer may be rejected in full and disqualified from this procurement process.

### **7.9 Acceptance of Offers**

Submitted documents shall constitute an irrevocable offer to provide the hedge and field maintenance services. The Council will not necessarily accept the lowest priced tender bid; the decision to award the contract will be based on the specified evaluation criteria and weightings.

### **7.10 Award of Contract**

Any acceptance by the Parish Council shall be communicated in writing to the applicant. Upon such acceptance by the applicant, the contract shall become binding on all parties.

The Council shall conclude a formal contract with the successful applicant, which shall embody the applicant's offer. No tender can be considered successful until a formal contract has been signed by an authorised Council officer and co-signed by the applicant's authorised officer.

This process is in accordance with the criteria listed at Regulation 67 of the 2015 *Public Contracts Regulations*.

## 8. Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Applicant</b>	The company or contractor responding to the ITT through the procurement process. This term is used intermittently with contractor.
<b>Arisings</b>	Means grass cuttings, weeds, shrub/rose off-cuts, unwanted soil etc, leaves, rubbish, dirt and debris at any location or in its immediate environment.
<b>Authorised Officer</b>	Means the principle contact at Hughenden Parish Council or such representatives notified by the Parish Council. Also the principle contact representing the applicant or contractor.
<b>Award</b>	The process by which the Parish Council shall determine to whom the Contract will be awarded.
<b>Bid</b>	The applicant's offer, which shall be submitted as the completed procurement documents.
<b>Contract</b>	The formal and legally binding agreement to be entered into by Hughenden Parish Council and the successful applicant following award under the procurement exercise.
<b>Contract Notice</b>	The publication by the Parish Council and its intention to procure a public supplies, services, or works Contract.
<b>Contractor</b>	The applicant or company awarded the contract; - culminating from an offer to provide services accepted by the Parish Council. This term is used intermittently with applicant.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The process through which the Applicant's Bid is reviewed in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria, following which a decision to award a Contract is made.
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	The means by which the Parish Council evaluates an applicant's bid; to include all of the issues that must be considered so as to be able to judge the suitability of an applicant's bid.
<b>Herbicides</b>	This is chemicals, compounds and/or any proprietary products produced for the control and/or eradication of weeds, fungi, algae or moss and including all fungicides, fumigants, algicides and moss killer.
<b>Invitation to Tender or ITT</b>	This is the written request (and all related documents) published by the Parish Council and made available for an interested applicant to submit a written bid to facilitate the Parish Council's requirements.
<b>Litter</b>	Including debris, detritus animal carcasses, cigarette butts, dog faeces and animal fouling, rubbish, salt and grit arising from winter maintenance, oil, vomit, gum, hypodermic syringes, needles and drug related material defined as clinical waste (in accordance with the <i>Control of Waste Regulations 1992</i> ); leaf and fruit fall and blown vegetation, bud burst, blossom, twigs and branches, deposits arising from fly tipping and other material howsoever caused or occurring.
<b>Obstacles</b>	Includes seats, streetlights, signs, manhole covers, memorials, trees, shrubs and any other obstruction within grassed areas. Obstacles also include edges of paths, wall and fence bases and other boundaries to grassed areas.
<b>On Additional Basis</b>	Additional and variable services identified in the specification, but not included in the tendered price.
<b>Open Procedure</b>	This is the procurement process determined by the <i>Public Contracts Regulations 2015</i>
<b>Parish Council or Council</b>	Hughenden Parish Council.
<b>Pesticides</b>	Including chemicals, compounds and/or any proprietary products for the control

	and/or eradication of pests and shall include insecticides, acaricides, lumbricides and molluscicides.
<b>Procurement</b>	Term used for the acquisition of supplies, services or works from an external source
<b>Public Contracts Regulations 2015</b>	This is the UK legislation concerning the procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts
<b>Public Liability Insurance</b>	The insurance covering members of the public coming onto the Parish Council's premises. It covers any awards of damages given because of an injury or damage to their property caused by the contractor. It also covers any related legal fees, costs and expenses as well as costs of hospital treatment that the NHS may claim from the contractor.
<b>Selection</b>	The process by which applicants will be selected within the procurement process, in accordance with Regulation 58 of the <i>Public Contracts Regulations 2015</i> .
<b>Services</b>	This is the provision of a schedule of maintenance works as identified in the specification.
<b>Specification</b>	A detailed description of the Parish Council's requirements for this contract of works.
<b>Sub-Contractor</b>	A subcontracting individual or company, carrying out work on behalf of the primary contractor, as part of the larger contracted project.
<b>Tender Response</b>	This is the applicant's formal response to the invitation to tender.
<b>Tenderers</b>	Means the applicants responding to this Invitation To Tender