

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR DELIVERY OF DIGITAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME TO SME’s

(PART OF ERDF-FUNDED NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT)

ERDF Landscape





The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is pleased to endorse this document. Through changes to their procurement process to support small businesses, Northamptonshire County Council are showing their commitment to improving the local economy. This positive action is a step forward in the simplification of the procurement process and the FSB look forward to working with Northamptonshire County Council to encourage effective trade between the Council and local small businesses.

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# INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Northamptonshire County Council invites tenders for the provision of a DIGITAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME FOR SME’s.

The Authority’s detailed requirements are defined in Section 2 - Specification.

Please take care in reading this document in particular the Specification in Section 2. In the event of any questions or queries in relation to this Invitation to Tender, please contact the buyer via the method stated below.

The Authority reserves the right to:

* carry out due diligence checks on the awarded provider;
* amend the conditions of Contract attached in Appendix 1;
* abandon the procurement process at any stage without any liability to the Authority; and or
* require the Potential Provider to clarify its tender in writing and if the Potential Provider fails to respond satisfactorily, this may result in the Potential Provider not being selected.

## BACKGROUND

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) aims to make Northamptonshire the best county in the UK to start, build and run a business. We are leading on the delivery of the European Regional Development Funded Northamptonshire Digital Enhancement project (NoDE). This project is being delivered in partnership with the University of Northampton through the Northamptonshire Growth Hub.

This project offers help to small and medium sized businesses in Northamptonshire who want to improve their broadband connectivity and develop digital innovation to grow their business.

An extension of the County Council’s Superfast Northamptonshire, the scheme will work in three ways:

* Offer a digital adviser and workshop programme to help businesses capitalise on technological advances
* Provide grants to support innovative digital business improvement projects
* Deliver a connection voucher scheme, enabling some businesses to upgrade to a superfast broadband connection by providing 50% of the cost

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/digitalbusiness](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/digitalbusiness)

[www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net](http://www.superfastnorthamptonshire.net)

[www.northamptonshiregrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.northamptonshiregrowthhub.co.uk)

We are inviting tenders for the preparation and delivery of the workshop programme which will be specifically targeted towards supporting and enabling digital enhancement within small and medium enterprises across Northamptonshire. The project will run until December 2018.

The Northamptonshire Digital Enhancement project procurement is following national guidelines for procurement of ERDF funded projects.

## PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Invitation to Tender Issued** | 4th September 2017 |
| **Deadline for Clarification Questions** | 5pm 22nd September 2017 |
| **Deadline for Responses** | 5pm 29th September 2017 |
| **Evaluation** | Estimate w/c 2nd October 2017 |
| **Contract Awarded / Start Date** | Estimate 1st November 2017 |
| **Deadline for Delivery** | 31st December 2018 |
| **Contract End Date** | 31st March 2019 |

## CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

Any queries about this document, the procurement process, or the proposed contract itself, should be referred to:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | Sarah Ellwood |
| **Job Title** | Senior Project Manager |
| **Email** | [sellwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sellwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk) |
| **Deadline for questions (date & time)** | 5pm 22nd September 2017 |

## APPLICATION PROCESS

There are two stages to this procurement process.

**Stage 1 - RESPONSE**

Applicant response to tender, accompanied by

* CV for all staff who may be involved in delivery of the workshops
* Section 3 completed
* 2 references from clients who have received training or business support from the applicant.

Completed documents should be submitted by 5pm 29th September 2017 to:

Sarah Ellwood [sellwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sellwood@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

**Evaluation criteria:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Maximum points** |
| Evidence that proposed content meets the criteria set-out in the tender and evidence of relevant workshop delivery experience | 10 |
| Evidence of understanding of the digital needs of SMEs | 10 |
| Provision of two references who may be contacted at a later stage / qualifications | 10 |
| Pricing and value for money | 20 |
| **TOTAL** | **50** |

Applicants scoring 35 points or more will proceed to stage 2.

The lowest cost bid will be given the maximum points weighting for the cost element (20). All other bids will then be compared against the lowest cost bid on a pro-rata basis. The formula that will be used to do the comparison is:

20 points x (lowest price/bid price)

**Response – Evaluation scoring criteria:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring criteria** | |
| 9-10 | Meets minimum requirements and adds significant benefits - Excellent relevant experience, Excellent understanding of SME needs, Superb references |
| 6-8 | Meets minimum requirements and adds some additional benefits - Good relevant experience, Good understanding of SME needs, Good references |
| 4-5 | Meets minimum requirements - Minimal relevant experience, Minimal understanding of SME needs, Satisfactory references |
| 1-3 | Standard below minimum requirements – some reservations |
| 0 | No response provided |

**Stage 2 - PRESENTATION & INTERVIEW**

Each shortlisted applicant may be required to attend for presentation and interview with project partners.

Failure to provide the required information, make a satisfactory response to any question or supply documentation referred to in responses, within the specified timescale, may mean that applicants will not be invited to participate further.

**Evaluation criteria:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Maximum points** |
| Presentation (date and venue to be advised ) | 10 |
| Response to interview questions | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **20** |

**Presentation & Interview – Evaluation scoring criteria:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring criteria** | |
| 9-10 | Provision of a high level of detail and key information which has allowed a thorough and extensive assessment.  All information is specific and relevant and very well thought out.  All of the issues raised by NCC have been considered or addressed to a very good degree;  The responses exceed all of NCC requirements.  High level of evidence that applicant can exceed requirements with detailed explanations/evidence in support.  NCC has no concerns and has a high level of confidence in the applicant’s proposals. |
| 6-8 | Provision of a good level of detail or key information which has allowed a thorough assessment.  Responses give a detailed, specific and well thought out answer to the question.  All of the issues raised by NCC have been considered and addressed to a good degree.  The responses satisfy all and exceed some of NCC requirements.  Appropriate level of evidence provided to indicate that the applicant can satisfy the requirement.  NCC has no concerns and has a good level of confidence in the applicant’s proposals. |
| 4-5 | Provision of a sufficient level of detail or key information which has allowed assessment.  Information is generally specific to the tender.  Responses answer the questions to an acceptable degree.  All of the issues raised by NCC have been considered or addressed to a satisfactory degree.  The responses satisfy all of NCC’s requirements.  There is evidence that the applicant can satisfy the requirement with minor reservations about ability to provide the service. NCC has some minor concerns and has confidence in the applicant’s proposals. |
| 1-3 | Very little information provided or key information omitted.  Responses do not properly answer the questions.  Very few of the issues raised by NCC have been considered or addressed, or they have been poorly considered/addressed.  The responses only satisfy a few of NCC’s requirements.  There is some evidence that the applicant can meet some of the requirement, but limited information and/or significant weaknesses.  NCC has little confidence in the applicant’s proposals. |
| 0 | No information provided and/or fundamentally unacceptable.  Responses do not answer the questions.  Responses do not consider/address the issues raised by NCC.  The responses do not satisfy any of the requirements.  Non-Compliant – there is no evidence that the applicant can meet the stated requirements.  NCC has no confidence in the applicant’s proposal. |

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## INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Following is an indicative timetable for those wishing to apply:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Closing date for submission of applications | 5pm 29th September 2017 |
| Presentation/interview dates | To be confirmed – w/c 9th October 2017 |
| Notification of award | Asap following presentation |
| Anticipated first workshop delivery date | ASAP |

# SPECIFICATION

The Northamptonshire Digital Enhancement project aims to improve broadband connectivity and develop digital innovation within small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) across Northamptonshire. This will be achieved through a combination of workshops, advice, grants and connection vouchers dependent upon the digital need of each SME.

The Northamptonshire Growth Hub will provide the gateway to all of the elements of the project and deliver ongoing adviser support to SME’s for the duration of the project, specifically to support in their development of a digital action plan.

This Invitation to Tender will deliver the workshop element - a series of half-day workshops designed to address the key issues in digital development affecting SME’s. The supplier is requested to submit a programme of workshops which will support up to 200 SMEs to grow digitally, with topics which may include:

* Digital Marketing Strategies
* Changes to online regulations e.g taxation
* Online security
* Cloud Computing for business
* Future proofing your business through emerging technologies

The Northamptonshire Growth Hub will manage the workshop booking process and work closely with the chosen supplier.

Submissions which include the delivery of some sessions online (webinars) will also be considered – however the supplier will need to demonstrate clearly how they will address all EU regulations, specifically relating to evidence reporting requirements.

Workshops will run until December 2018 and we anticipate that workshop delivery will commence soon after the contract is awarded.

**Workshop programme delivery requirements**

In order to deliver the project services to SMEs, we wish to procure a provider who can develop and deliver interactive workshops in venues across Northamptonshire or online. We are seeking specialists in their field to facilitate and deliver each workshop topic using case studies and content tailored to meet the needs of aspirational and high growth potential businesses. Ideally applicants will have a proven track record in growing their own business and providing digital solutions to other companies or with relevant previous funded programmes.

**We expect the successful applicant to deliver an engaging programme of digital workshops, which address the needs of up to 200 SME’s.**

**Budget:**

£24,000 to deliver the workshop programme. This includes preparation of workshop content, presentation and provision of hand-outs or electronic supporting material.

The fee element shall include the cost of all labour, equipment, delivery, materials and travel.

**All quotes submitted must state whether VAT is included or not however note that the budget is exclusive of VAT.**

**Contractual arrangements**

Successful providers will be expected to enter into a service agreement with Northamptonshire County Council and work closely with the project team to ensure successful delivery of the project.

Applicants are required to provide evidence of current Professional Indemnity Insurance to the value of at least £250,000.

# Queries about the procurement

Any queries must be submitted by email to the contact named above.

NCC does not accept, and will not respond to any **verbal** requests for clarification / information.

All questions and responses will be made available to all applicants, in an anonymous form.

# SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Please complete section 3 and 4 below.

## Organisation and Contact Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A-1 Name of your organisation** |  |
| **A-2 Registered office (if applicable)** |  |
| **A-3 Trading address (if different from registered**  **office)** |  |
| **A-4 Organisation Registration Number**  **(if applicable)** |  |
| **A-5 Is your organisation a:**   * Sole Trader * Partnership * Public Limited Company * Private Ltd Company * Voluntary & Community Sector * Charity * SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) * Other |  |
| **If you selected other, please specify** |  |
| **A-6 What, if any, local connections do you have with the County** |  |
| **A-7 If the Company is a member of a group of companies, please give the name and address of the ultimate holding company** |  |
| **A-8 Name of person to whom any queries relating to this tender should be addressed** |  |
| **A-9 Telephone** |  |
| **A-10 Email** |  |
| **A-11 Address**  **(if different to the Address above)** |  |

# PRICING SHEET

## Pricing and Costs

The available budget for this procurement exercise is £24,000. Please insert your costs in the table below. The costs should be broken down into components with a full description of each component and its associated time and costs.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **[Component]** | **[Component description]** | **[Delivery by]** | **[Costs (£)]** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | **Total Costs (£):** |  |  |

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & SIGNATURE AND DATE

Information in relation to this tender may be made available on demand in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“The Act”) and your organisation details will be disclosed where the expenditure is over £500 as per the Government Transparency agenda. Details of all contracts worth £25,000 or more in total value will also be published on the Authority’s website.

Organisations should state if any of the information supplied by them is confidential and commercially sensitive or should not be disclosed in response for the Information under the Act. Organisations should state why they consider the information to be confidential or commercially sensitive.

Please state here any specific information in this tender that you do not wish to be disclosed under Freedom of information Act. This will not guarantee that the information will not be disclosed but will be examined in the light of the exemptions provided in the Act.

**INVITATION TO TENDER FOR** **DELIVERY OF DIGITAL WORKSHOP PROGRAMME TO SME’S.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I the undersigned hereby declare by marking an X in the box: |  |

that the information provided is complete and accurate;

1. that the price in Section 4 is our best offer;
2. that no collusion with other organisations has taken place in order to fix the price;
3. to be subjected to the terms and conditions set out in Conditions of Contract;
4. that no works/goods/supplies/services will be delivered or undertaken until both parties have executed the formal contract documentation and an instruction to proceed has been given by the Authority in writing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **Position Held** |  |
| **Date** |  |