**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHAMBER of COMMERCE (Incorporating Milton Keynes)**

**Invitation to tender**

**IT Infrastructure & Managed Services**





 **GROUP**

**   **

**Our strategy:**

To create a thriving, relevant Chamber of Commerce for all businesses across Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes from Start-up Businesses to Corporates. We will strive to:

* Facilitate businesses to make strategic connections
* Develop skills & knowledge to remove barriers for growth
* Provide up to date information and advice
* Provide a ‘safe place’ for business owners to share ambitions and challenges
* Enable and encourage business to trade locally, nationally, and internationally.
* To celebrate each other successes whilst maintaining a strong community spirit

**Introduction**

The Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce is accepting proposals from our fully paid-up Chamber membership for the supply, implementation and ongoing support of IT Infrastructure (on premises or cloud solutions) and associated managed services.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this request for proposal is to ensure a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide the candidates with the necessary evaluation criteria.

The successful candidate will have demonstrated proficiency, experience, a clear plan and strategy for the infrastructure and managed services, understanding of cost-benefit analysis and a working approach that is compatible with the Chamber’s need for a long-term relationship.

**About us:**

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce and Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce are the largest not for profit business support membership organisation covering the geographical areas of Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes. Offering, membership, training, events, policy & representation, and international trade to businesses of all sizes and sectors. Based in Northamptonshire we represent over 1000+ businesses /100,000 employees. With a team of 14 people, we are an active Chamber delivering over 100 networking events per year and processing over 8500 international trade documents. In 2021 we launched our Women with Vision network and also support and mentor young professionals within our Next Generation Chamber, in addition we also host the prestigious Northamptonshire Business Awards.

We work closely with local, regional, and global stakeholders and key partners to further the local economy and influence economic development activity.

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce is actively engaged with the British Chambers of Commerce network, one of 51 accredited Chamber in the UK.

The Chamber has one office with a mix of office and hybrid working. Most staff have laptops and use them to work from home where necessary, and it is essential that they are able to continue to do so, we do also have some desktop computers. The server can be connected to from home via a VPN client.

We currently have 2 physical servers and 8 virtual servers and use a SQL server to connect to essential applications which are Exchequer for finance and payroll, All office-based staff have Chamber issued email addresses and access to office 365. We would like the chosen provider to purchase and manage these licenses on our behalf, with the option to add or remove licenses as needed. We require an anti-virus system to protect the chamber against threats including phishing, ransomware and account takeovers. Currently we are using Microsoft Defender for cyber security and currently awaiting Cyber Essential Basics.

There is a 1Gpbs City-fibre internet. We provide a Wi-Fi connection for staff and the public and this currently has 1 guest and 1 secure login.

We have 2 websites hosted by a third party; domains are held with the current IT provider.

The Chamber would like to continue to embrace new ways of working and move towards being fully digitised as well as improving communications and storage. We all have access to Microsoft 365 but this is not fully utilised. Cloud storage for our existing files with shared access but also private files could be a way forward.

We are also looking to evaluate our network security and configuration and will look to the new provider to recommend any changes that they think should be made.

Core working hours are 8.00 to 4.30, no weekends. Some early morning or early evening events.

Further information is included in APPENDIX A.

**Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key dates** | **Activity** |
| 4th October 2025 | Tender document issued  |
| 6th-24th October 2025 | Site visits by appointment only |
| 31st October 2025 | Final tender responses to be submitted  |
| 20th November 2025 | Top three organisations invited to present tender responses to the panel at the Chamber offices.  |
| 28th November 2025 | Tender awarded to successful organisation  |
| TBA | Contract start date  |

**Evaluation**

Tenders will be evaluated by members of the Project Team/Board at Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce.

The evaluation panel will consist of the Senior Management Team, one Board Member and an external stakeholder.

The panel will evaluate each bidder’s response and award the contract to the supplier that offers the most economically and operationally advantageous proposal based upon the Chambers overriding requirements.

Should the Chamber decide to conduct the interview process with a candidate we will write to you to confirm date, time and venue.

**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 Julie Maclennan if you have any questions. Pre-tender negotiations are not permitted.

**Contract Period**

The Chamber is seeking a contract for an initial period of 3 years, with the ability for the Chamber to extend this into a 5-year contract if required.

**Incomplete Tender Documents**

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

**Returning Tender Documents**

The completed tender form must be marked ICT Tender for the attention of The Chief Executive, to arrive no later than 31st October 2025 to louise.wall@mk-northantschamber.co.uk

**Receipt of Tender Documents**

Completed tender documents will be received up to 31st October 2025 . 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 Chamber is not bound in any way to continue with the tender process.

**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 Chamber any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing your tender or expression of interest, whether or not your tender is successful.

**Feedback**

Following the award of contract, feedback will be included in the letter sent to unsuccessful bidders.

**Tender Scoring**

Each tender response will be evaluated against an agreed scoring method. The scoring method is shown in Appendix B of this document.

**Conclusions**

Whilst every endeavour has been made to give tenderers an accurate description of the Chamber’s requirement, tenderers should make their own assessment about the methods and resources needed to meet those requirements.

**Outline of Chamber Requirements**

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce has outlined below the high-level requirements for the contract. This will enable organisations to determine if they wish to submit a tender.

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce 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 Chamber 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.

**Support & Infrastructure**

The Chamber’s IT systems are currently supported by a third-party IT support company. The existing support is provided remotely and on-site. We would like to be proactively kept up to date with new technologies or security protocols which are best practice for our business.

The Chamber requires a new IT support contract to be put in place which covers all Chamber staff, and locations including those who are not based on site.

The minimum requirements for IT Support include:

* IT helpdesk service for reactive IT support provided by phone and email with the ability to monitor any outstanding tickets.
* On premise end user IT support, as required, at all Chamber locations.
* On premise support of the IT hardware and software at all Chamber locations, as required.
* Management of any cloud or hosted elements of the IT Infrastructure.
* Proactive maintenance of the Chambers’ IT Infrastructure including applying patches and making changes to settings in accordance with industry best practice.
* Proactive monitoring of the Chambers’ IT systems to ensure software and hardware faults are detected and corrected.
* Remotely apply patches and updates for end user hardware and software within the IT systems of the Chamber.
* Purchase and monitoring of appropriate licences.
* Diagnose and repair faulty devices where a fix is possible.
* Proactive monitoring and management of the Chamber’ data backup and business continuity systems.
* Proactive monitoring of the Chambers’ IT security software and hardware including endpoint protection software, firewalls and encryption.
* Reacting accordingly to security threats detected by the Chambers’ IT security software.
* Assigning appropriate permissions to protect the Chamber against unauthorised access to our devices.
* Quarterly reports on the utilisation of the IT support system along with recommendations on changes that should be made to the system(s).
* Arranging the purchase and set up of new equipment including warranties when required.
* Named account/service delivery manager to attend quarterly support meetings and discuss any ongoing projects or concerns.
* Ability to work with our 3rd party telephone, website and CRM providers.

We require a service level agreement no less than the following:

Critical – issues that could cause major business or financial exposure, affect business critical tasks or prevent multiple users from being able to do their jobs.

High – issues that could cause minor business or financial exposure, cause minor delays to business-critical tasks or cause disruption to a small number of users.

Medium – issues that will have a minimal impact on the business and users.

Advice – a request for information or guidance which has no impact on the day to day running of the business.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Targets**  | **Priority 1 (Critical)**  | **Priority 2 (High)**  | **Priority 3 (Medium)**  | **Priority 4 (Advice)**  |
| **Response**  | 30 mins  | 2 hours  | 4 hours  | 4 hours  |
| **Updates**  | Every 1 hour  | Within 4 hours  | Daily  | Within 5 days  |
| **Fix Time**  | 10 hours  | 20 hours  | 3 days  | 5 days  |

The Chamber would expect a claw back of service credits if SLAs are not met with ultimately termination of contract if these are not met.

The rates and prices inserted by the candidate will be inclusive of all disbursements and exclusive of VAT.

**IT Support Infrastructure**

**Appendix A - Site Address and Existing IT System**

|  |
| --- |
| Lockgates House |
| 6 Rushmills |
| Northampton NN4 7YB |

|  |
| --- |
| **Existing IT System**  |
| The existing system includes the following:  | 22 Microsoft 365 Business Premium licences 1 Power BI LicenceSome have Microsoft Power Automate Free+ Microsoft Fabric\*Microsoft Defender 6 desktops, 12 laptops, 12 iPads All are remotely managed and access the server with ethernetWFH access through VPN (Cisco)3 staff with a desktop access applications Exchequer. A third-party agreement is in place for the applications but we require our IT support to update to the latest version when required 2 WIFI access points 25mbps fibre connection CityFibreCisco Firewalls supported by the current IT provider1 card machines supported by a 3rd party but connected to our main firewallIn the process of updating to Synology local backup and AcronisAll network switches, routers and firewalls have static IP addresses - a dynamic range is available for laptop/desktops and any visitor devicePhotocopiers managed by 3rd party Telephone managed by 3rd partyCRM manged by a 3rd party – has plugin to Microsoft outlook \* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Microsoft 365 Business Premium | 22 |
| Power BI Pro | 1 |
|  |  |
| Business Premium this month is £21.84 per user on monthly commit |  |

**\*changes may have occurred since time of writing**

**IT Tender Appendix B – Evaluation & Scoring Method**

**Evaluation**

Tenders will be evaluated by members of the Project Team/Board at Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce.

The evaluation panel will consist of the Senior Management Team and one Board Member

The panel will evaluate each bidder’s response and award the contract to the supplier that offers the most economically and operationally advantageous proposal based upon the Chambers overriding requirements.

Should the Chamber decide to conduct the interview process with a candidate we will write to you again to confirm date, time and venue.

**How your proposal will be evaluated**

Each of your responses to the following Method Statements will be evaluated using scores that reflect the extent to which the responses have addressed the published criteria. Candidate must respond to the Method Statements in full and avoid making unsubstantiated reference to company policies, statements or other documents.

**Pricing Criteria**

The Chamber requires a fully inclusive price for the tender and the expectation for each criterion is outlined below.

All pricing in the proposal must be inclusive, if there are exclusions for specific cost such as third-party licensing of software, must provide a detailed list and explanation of this cost. All costs for additional development or consulting that is outside of the scope of this request must be stated in terms of hourly rate, flat fee or retainer

**Appendix B – Scoring Method**

The tender responses will be scored after the official closing date for tender submissions.

Each response will be scored based on the following:

Account management

Service delivery

Suitability of technical solutions

Pricing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Each answer within the submission will be scored using the following system: Score**  | **Guidance**  |
| **5 – Excellent**  | The Tenderer has provided a thorough response, addressing all requirements in extensive detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full, with added value solutions.  |
| **4 – Good**  | The Tenderer has provided a strong response addressing most of the requirements in detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full.  |
| **3 – Satisfactory**  | The Tenderer has provided a satisfactory response addressing most of the requirements in sufficient detail, providing confidence that most requirements can be met.  |
| **2 – Acceptable**  | The Tenderer has provided an acceptable response addressing some of the requirements with partial detail. There are a few concerns about whether or not the requirements can be met, which require further clarification.  |
| **1 – Unsatisfactory**  | The Tenderer has provided a minimal response addressing some of the requirement with very little detail. The response provided does not provide full confidence that the requirements can be met.  |
| **0 – Major Concerns**  | The Tenderer has failed to address the question, submitted a nil response or any element of the response gives cause for major concern that requirements will not be met.  |

**Appendix C – Tender Response Form**

IT Support Infrastructure & Managed Services

**Notes for completion**

1. The “chamber” means Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce , or anyone acting on behalf of the chamber, that is seeking to invite suitable candidates to participate in this procurement process.

2. “You” / “Your” refers to the potential supplier completing this standard Selection Questionnaire i.e. the legal entity responsible for the information provided.

3. Please ensure that all questions are completed in full, and in the format requested. If the question does not apply to you, please state ‘N/A.’ Should you need to provide additional information in response to the questions, please submit a clearly identified annex.

4. Every organisation that is being relied on to meet the selection must complete and submit the self-declaration.

5. If the lead organisation intends to use sub-contractors, they are required to complete the method statements and questionnaire.

The chamber confirms that it will keep confidential and will not disclose to any third parties any information obtained from a named customer contact.

**Sub-Contractors**

If the work requires the use of subcontractors, this must be stated clearly in the proposal. The Chamber will not refuse a proposal based on using subcontractors, however the subcontractors must be identified and the work they perform clearly defined. Any subcontractor must be a limited company or partnership with public liability, employers’ liability, and indemnity insurance.

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| **Criteria** | **Expectation** |
| Licencing | Cost per licence, breakdown of cost over three years, multiple user discounts, licensing model (named user or concurrent) |
| Project management, installation, configuration, deployment, and training | Fixed price costs assuming provision of standard solution meeting specification. Additional work as requested by Chamber to be at standard rates. |
| Support and maintenance | Annual maintenance cost, breakdown of different support options |
| Updates and Upgrades | All product updates and upgrades to be inclusive of cost |
| Training services | Schedule of User acceptance training, training the trainers and all power user training required to administer the system |

The rates and prices inserted by the candidate will be inclusive of all disbursements and exclusive of VAT.

**Method Statements & Questionnaire**

To help judge your capacity to meet our requirements you must provide a number of Method Statements & answers to the questionnaires. Each response to these statements should be no more than the indicated word count.

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| --- |
| **1 Experience and Expertise**  |
| A statement of approach and experience is required; this should contain an overview of the candidate’s experience in implementing IT Infrastructure and Managed Services for clients. Relevant work is to be provided; examples of successful implementations should be submitted.You should include three examples of similar work undertaken with the following details:* Name of organisation
* Value
* Brief description of the service
* Start and end dates

**Assessment Criteria*** Understanding the Chamber requirement
* Demonstration of experience of providing similar services

**Maximum words – 1000****Weighting -15%** |
| **Response:** |

|  |
| --- |
| **2 Support** |
| Detail arrangements for customer service contact methods, Helpdesk service level agreements and routine maintenance windows. Optional support options for out-of-business hours and weekendsSpecify expected roadmap for product updates and upgrades over the following 12-18 monthsThe Chamber requires remote and onsite support for the IT, solutions as and when required in delivery of the contract.Can you provide a support service via a helpdesk function that can be accessed by all staff?If the is “Yes,” please explain what service level agreements are associated with the helpdesk function in terms of responses and levels of priorities for issues raised. 1. Does your support system use a ticket-based approach for issues raised?
2. How can chamber staff access the support system?
3. Are you able to provide historic data on support calls, including types of call, details and time taken?
4. Will you be able to provide onsite support utilising full time employed members of staff and not sub-contractors or third parties?
5. Can you provide a member of your technical support staff onsite at the Chamber within 2 hours of an emergency incident occurring/being reported during normal business hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm)?
6. What is the support plan for offline issues?
7. What is the support plan for backup and disaster recovery solutions?
8. Some Chamber staff operate outside of Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4:30pm, can you provide support remotely and onsite outside of these hours if required?
9. Do you have an emergency on call system for issues raised outside of your normal working hours for the help desk? Please explain how this system works if you have one
10. Are there any limitations to the support package e.g., number of tickets raised, quantity of hours used, onsite vs. remote work? If yes, please explain
11. Are you able to take responsibility for equipment disposal? If so, can it be carried out to a professional standard with certification provided?
12. Are you able to handle the process of repair items under warranty?
13. Can you carry out a repair service for out of warranty items?
14. How will you monitor the performance and availability of the services delivered by yourself during the contract?
15. How does your support system work in a way that ensures the chamber is able to meet its GDPR responsibilities?
16. Does your support system have a change control process implemented and if so, how would this be used?
17. For new starters, leavers and modifications to user accounts, do you have a process in place to manage these?

**For the questions below, please ensure answers relate to the services you would be delivering as part of this tender only**1. How many full-time members of staff do you have working on the technical support helpdesk?
2. How many full-time members of staff do you have working in a technical field support roll?
3. How many full-time members of staff do you have working in customer account management?
4. How many full-time members of staff do you have working in project delivery / implementation?
5. How do you hope to combat phishing attempts within the Chamber?
6. Do you provide training to highlight phishing to staff members?
7. How will you ensure all devices are securely encrypted and only accessed by authorised parties?
8. How will you manage and store device encryption keys?
9. How will you implement and ensure a secure password policy is adhered to?

Please outline the process for identifying and dealing with a data breach**Assessment Criteria*** Service delivery
* Suitability of technical solutions
* Ability to provide support within business hours
* Ability to show continuous improvement and future features

**Maximum words – 1500****Weighting – 25%** |
| **Response:** |

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| **3 Implementation & Account Management** |
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| --- | --- |
| Please provide a high-level overview of your onboarding/take over plan for the IT systems (max of 500 words) |  |
| 1. Will you be able to migrate all of the chamber’s Office 365 licences?
 |  |
| 1. Will you provide a named account manager covering all services required?
 |  |
| Please outline how you successfully provide the account management function to customers and how this will be implemented for the chamber (max of 500 words) |  |
| 1. How regularly would you propose to have account reviews?
 |  |
| 1. Will you operate a full Account Management function in support of your solutions for all chamber requirements?
 |  |
| 1. Will you be the primary contractor and function as the sole billing entity to the Chamber for all services delivered?
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| 1. Will you be the primary contractor and function as the sole support entity to the chamber for all services delivered?
 |
| 1. How are complaints dealt with?
 |

**Assessment Criteria*** Experience of delivery personnel
* Ability to deliver project within timescales

**Maximum words – 1250****Weighting – 15%** |
| **Response:** |

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| --- |
| **4 Business Fit** |
| For qualification purposes the proposal should include a brief company profile, the length of time in business, the Board of Directors, the hosting capacity of the service, vendor or licenced arrangements, the last set of audited accounts, public liability, employers’ liability and professional indemnity insurance with a minimum of £1,000,000 and any other appropriate attributes.1. Please confirm if your organisation is certified to ISO 27001 Security Management. If yes, please attach a copy of your certificate.
2. Please confirm if your organisation is certified to ISO 20000 IT Service Management. If yes, please attach a copy of your certificate.
3. Please confirm if your organisation is certified to ISO 9001 Quality Management. If yes, please attach a copy of your certificate.
4. Does your organisation have the NCSC Cyber Essentials qualification?
5. Does your organisation have the NCSC Cyber Essentials Plus qualification?

A brief overview of what makes you different from other candidates and why the Chamber should choose your proposal should be included**Assessment Criteria*** Market experience and history of candidate
* Candidate is fit for purpose

**Maximum words – 1000****Weighting -15%** |
| **Response** |

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| --- |
| **5 Costs** |
| Detail arrangements for customer service contact methods, Helpdesk service level agreements and routine maintenance windows. Optional support options for out-of-business hours and weekendsSpecify expected roadmap for product updates and upgrades over the following 12-18 months1. Please provide the costs associated with each of the following, per month:
2. Providing IT support per user
3. Please confirm if there are any other user-related costs e.g., onboarding
4. The one-off labour cost, outside of the IT support package, to deploy a standard PC/laptop to the chamber, excluding the cost of the hardware/software
5. Please give examples of any work that would be outside the scope of the IT support package e.g., cabling
6. Example hourly rates for ay work that would be outside the scope of the IT support package
7. Office 365 licence options
8. Internet connectivity
9. Firewall security system, if not already included with the connectivity price
10. Cloud server hosting and any additional costs associated with the data backup and disaster recovery solutions.
11. Management of the cloud infrastructure
12. Cyber security
13. Equipment disposal
14. Any other costs not already requested in this document
15. Account management of the IT system
16. Claw back of service credits if SLAs not met

**Assessment Criteria*** Ability to provide support within business hours
* Ability to show continuous improvement and future features

**Maximum words – 1000****Weighting -30%** |
| **Response:** |

**Contract Terms**

The Chamber will enter a contract negotiation and final pricing on selection of the preferred candidate. All contracts are subject to review by the Chamber legal counsel and the Board of Directors. The project will be awarded on signing of a contract of agreement, which outlines the terms, scope, budget deliverables, timelines, and other necessary items.

Further clarification or information can be obtained from the Project Coordinator –

Group Operations Director Julie.maclennan@northants-chamber.co.uk 01604 490490

All submissions to Louise.wall@mk-northantschamber.co.uk

**Contact details and declaration**

I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted, and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay I will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the chamber may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Contact Details and Declaration |
|  | Question | Response |
|  | Contact name |  |
|  | Name of organisation |  |
|  | Role in organisation |  |
|  | Phone number |  |
|  | E-mail address |  |
|  | Postal address |  |
|  | Signature (electronic is acceptable) |  |
|  |