



Invitation to tender for provision of an online platform to deliver HR Metrics surveys and data benchmarking for local authorities across the country

Enquiries from various Bidders during week commencing 14 December 2020 and Answers to the questions at 18 December 2020 -

Enquiry 1

Objectives

11. ... *It is important that there is seamless transition from the current provision arrangements so that users can continue to access an application for their ongoing needs of data entry and output generation from 1 April 2021.*

To ensure there is a seamless transition from the current system to our system we will plan the migration. To help us plan, please:

- provide a copy of all the surveys

Answer - London Councils is not providing copies of the surveys for this tender. A list of the surveys has been provided. The successful bidder will be provided with relevant information to enable successful migration of data from the current system to a new one. Relevant project methodology for migration can be outlined by bidders and will be sufficient for evaluation. If absolutely necessary, the implementation go live date of 1 April 2021 may be extended but subject to negotiation and mitigation of any disruption to survey timetabling.

- describe the current technical stack (i.e. infrastructure) including:
 - hosting arrangements (cloud or local server at London Councils)

Answer – Cloud

- database storage; which database is used Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, MySQL, etc.

Answer – This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. The successful bidder will be provided with relevant information to enable successful migration of data from the current system to a new one.

- survey software used / format surveys are stored in

Answer – This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. It is anticipated that the successful bidder will have their own survey software and methods for

collecting, holding and presenting the information. The key is to enable output data that can be easily read/ interpreted by data users.

- provide a copy of all the Outputs results/benchmarking
 - charts
 - pdf reports
 - scorecards
 - dashboards
 - Excel spreadsheet outputs
 - text

Please use test input data, delete or blank out real data – we do not need to see actual data which may be confidential.

Answer – This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. It is anticipated that the successful bidder will have their own approach and methods for collecting, holding and presenting the information. The key is to enable output data that can be easily accessed/ read/ interpreted by data users.

Does London Councils have a backup of the database?

Answer - No

What documentation does London Councils have?

- Database documentation; e.g., Data Dictionary and Database Diagram

Answer – No

- Systems Administration documentation

Answer - Yes (a brief summary for users)

- User documentation; e.g., how to login, fill out the surveys, raise issues, access the dashboards, etc.

Answer - Yes (a summary for users)

Please provide a copy of the documentation –

Answer – This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids.

14. *“The full list of surveys, and their output requirements, can be found at Appendix A. Data for the surveys is collected and published on a rolling timetable throughout the year, with roughly one per month. A full data collection and publication timetable for 2020/21 is available on request”.*

Please send a copy of the data collection and publication **timetable** for 2020/21.

Answer - The timetable is attached at appendix A. It is currently under review and likely to change.

Requirements

15. London Councils' detailed technical specification for the online application is set out in Appendix B. However, the key requirements for the online application are that it must:

- be able to migrate our historic survey data into outputs that are available going forward;

Please confirm that all historic survey data is held in a database, i.e. there is no requirement to convert historic survey data into the database.

Answer - London Councils is able to download the raw data for each survey using Excel spreadsheets. This is the data that London Councils would provide for migration.

15. London Councils' detailed technical specification for the online application is set out in Appendix B. However, the key requirements for the online application are that it must:

- offer backwards compatibility to **IE8**;

See also **Appendix B – Detailed technical specification**

Row Number 22.

Backwards compatibility - Some councils use older versions of IE - the application needs to be accessible/usable for users of older versions of IE (currently version IE9).

Microsoft stopped supporting IE8 in 2016 and IE9 in 2017 and there have been **no security patches** since this time. Older browser may not render modern websites well (and may pose a security risk if unpatched).

Please confirm the requirement for Backwards compatibility and London Councils' acceptance of the **security** and display implications of using older, unsupported browsers.

Answer - London Councils is conducting a survey of users on which web browser they are using. Users have been asked to respond by 23 December 2020. This question response will be updated once the results of the survey are known.

Appendix A – Surveys likely to be required from April 2021 onwards

Bulk upload by Councils

Please explain what you mean by “**Bulk** upload by Councils”.

Does “Bulk upload” mean that Councils upload a lot of data on a customised Excel form?

Answer - Yes

or

Does “Bulk upload” mean that Councils upload completed multiple surveys all at the same time?

Answer - No

Upload by online form

The HR Resources Survey is not currently uploaded by an online form. Please describe what type of data is gathered on the HR Resources Survey. Is the data “transactional”, i.e., data per member of staff?

Answer – No. The data relates more to type of role e.g. recruitment, payroll, and number of staff resources assigned to the role.

Row Number 38

What do you mean by “*Open and close surveys for the current survey period*”? Is each survey completed across all areas at the same time?

Answer - Yes at the moment and to enable full survey return from data contributors/users the survey closure date can be extended on occasion to facilitate a fuller return.

Are there different versions of the surveys for different areas/regions?

Answer - The questionnaires are in some cases slightly different for different regions to accommodate differences in type of council (e.g. district, county) and/or client expectations of output.

Row Number 48

Survey respondents at the councils using the surveys can input/edit data directly into a secure web form or by end-user upload of customized Excel forms (in a specific, pre-determined format specified by London Councils) on the providers’ website. End-user bulk uploads as described in the sentence above are required for pay surveys and other surveys with a large volume of data to submit. (See List of Surveys for more detail.)

Please provide example files of a 'specific, pre-determined format specified by London Councils'.

Answer - An example is described in the Technical Specification. London Councils is not providing survey documents for this tender. This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids.

Row Number 55

Provider required to update pay survey data by the amount of annual pay award in years when the pay award is announced after the data has been partly or completely collected. Pay surveys to ascertain whether data councils upload includes that year's pay award and where it does not, the provider is to update the pay data given by the % amount of the pay award. This applies only to councils that apply the national pay awards and those with local conditions that mean that the same % award is made.

What is the scope of work involved? Does the provider (i.e., us) have to update 1 row per council - or 1000 rows per council?

Answer - The provider would update as many rows of data as the councils that want the pay award applied have submitted (some councils with local pay arrangements may not want the award applied). This could be in the region of 350 per council but could be more as for some surveys councils can enter as many roles as they wish.

Where can we find the national pay deal information?

Answer- This is announced when the pay award is agreed. London Councils will email the provider with the notification. You can see the Local Government Association website for general information about pay for Local Government Services staff.

Row Number 87

Data to be uploaded by councils using custom-designed Excel input forms the content design and layout of which to be as specified by London Councils to exactly match those in current use. These to be downloadable by users from the provider's website.

Please provide examples of the *custom-designed Excel input forms the content design and layout.*

Answer - This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. It is anticipated that the successful bidder will have their own approach and methods for collecting, holding and presenting the information. Whilst, London Councils has a current methodology for data collection, if the successful bidder identifies a methodology that might be more effective this can be used. The key is to enable output data that can be easily accessed/ read/ interpreted by data users.

Row Number 88 and 89

These outputs are as specified by London Councils in the form of custom-designed Excel spreadsheets to match those in current use. The outputs to be available for users to download as compiled sets of data with calculated fields, numeric and text values including free text and drop-down selections. All including the presentation layout and appearance are to be as specified by London Councils. Exports must reflect latest version of data.

For example, the HR Resources survey outputs comprise an Excel workbook of 7 custom-designed spreadsheets including a table showing a compilation of free text entries per council; tables showing top-line summaries of average FTE employee numbers by 5 different categories, headcount and average of HR FTE ratios to workforce headcount and number of the survey responses by "as at" date; table of average FTE of HR by work type and grade band for all councils in the region; table of average FTE of HR by work type and grade band for Inner London; same for Outer London (in the case of London but by other council categories for other regions - ie: County/ Metropolitan Borough/Unitary council and District Councils) all values to be calculated from the data provided by each council in its custom-designed Excel upload form); table of outsourced HR work by council by work type with name of provider; table of shared HR work by work type with name of partner/partners. As this survey does not have a raw data export option. the provider will need to give the relevant Regional Head their councils' raw data on request to enable them to conduct data checks.

Question: how many unique designs are there?

Answer - At the moment the surveys using the custom forms are as set out in Appendix A in the tender documents. The designs may change and additional custom designs may be required. Whilst, London Councils has a current methodology for data collection, if the successful bidder identifies a methodology that might be more effective this can be used. The key is to enable output data that can be easily accessed/ read/ interpreted by data users.

For a survey, does it have just one customised Excel spreadsheet, or are there different designs for each Council?

Answer - There is one custom sheet per survey for inputting (they may differ slightly between regions). Outputs may require multiple custom sheets (as per the example you refer to in Rows Number 88 and 89). Whilst, London Councils has a current methodology for data collection, if the successful bidder identifies a methodology that might be more effective this can be used. The key is to enable output data that can be easily accessed/ read/ interpreted by data users.

Please provide example Excel spreadsheets.

Answer - This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids.

Enquiry 2

1. Users to have the ability to generate their own bespoke results outputs including reports and scorecards and Excel outputs, which can be customised. Would you be able to provide some detail as to the type of reports they would need to generate? Our platform enables users to create their own scorecards and surveys and there are elements of extracts available as well as using the dashboard to surface survey results as a KPIs. An example of the type of excel output and type of customisation would be helpful if you are able to.

Answer - This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. It is anticipated that the successful bidder will have their own approach and methods for collecting, holding and presenting the information. The key is to enable output data that can be easily accessed/ read/ interpreted by data users.

2. The platform must offer backwards compatibility to IE8 – is this absolutely compulsory? Our platform supports IE11 onwards and due to various technical and security reasons we would not be able to partake should this requirement be essential.

Answer - London Councils is conducting a survey of users on which web browser they are using. Users have been asked to respond by 23 December 2020. This

question and answer response will be updated once the results of the survey are known.

Enquiry 3

a. Could I request the full data collection and publication timetable for 2020/2021

Answer - The timetable is attached. It is currently under review and likely to change

b. Could you provide me a sample of a survey (to understand the (1) typical survey formats and (2) one that is most complex)

Answer - An example is described in the Technical Specification. London Councils is not providing survey documents for this tender. This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids.

c. What is the typical size of each survey (or the number of rows/columns for a typical survey)

Answer - An example is described in the Technical Specification. London Councils is not providing survey documents for this tender. This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids.

d. Do you allow members who have not submitted a particular survey to retrospectively submit in order to participate in that benchmark (in the same regard are surveys locked and final once posted or can be corrected post date)

Answer – Not as rule, but exceptions have been made if it deemed appropriate to enable a better benchmarking output and assessment of results. The determination comes from the client's needs, the ease with which additional/ late information can be accommodated and whether the final data usage and output of results will enable analysis and insight.

e. In terms of the migration of the previous data, can you provide information on the current database/system that is already being used (including if the previous datasets are in a database, excel format or a csv)

Answer - This is not deemed relevant to assessment of the bids. The successful bidder will be provided with relevant information to enable successful migration of data from the current system to a new one. Relevant project methodology for migration can be outlined by bidders and will be sufficient for evaluation.

Appendix A

London Councils HR Metrics Service - 2021 Timetable of Surveys		
Survey Title	Survey start date	Deadline for returns
Analysis of DfE CSW Workforce data	n/a this survey uses data published by DfE	n/a data published by DfE
HR Resources	22 February 2021 (collecting current data)	23 April 2021
Gender Pay Gap	n/a this survey uses data published by Cabinet Office	n/a data published by Cabinet Office
Human Capital Metrics	3 May 2021 (collecting 2020-21 data)	9 July 2021
CO Pay & Benefits	10 May 2021 (collecting data as at 1 April 2021)	2 July 2021
Pay & Benefits (SW)	10 May 2021 (collecting data as at 1 April 2021)	16 July 2021
Pay & Benefits (exc SW)	10 May 2021 (collecting data as at 1 April 2021)	16 July 2021 2021
TU Membership and Facilities Time	20 September 2021 (collecting current data)	29 October 2021
Terms and Conditions	18 October 2021 (snapshot of current data as at the time of the survey)	26 November 2021
HR Outputs	29 November 2021 (collecting 2019-20 data)	21 January 2022
HR Resources	21 February 2022 (snapshot of current data at the time of the survey)	1 April 2022
Timescales depend on councils providing data by the deadline. Dates may change. Each borough should ensure that the data it provides has been produced in accordance with the survey guidance; and reflects the true position within their council.		