



MEDWAY COUNCIL

Preliminary Market Engagement Notice Invitation and Agenda

Highways Infrastructure Contract

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Document Control Sheet

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

This notice is not a call for competition and participation is not a prerequisite to bidding. No information provided during this engagement will be used in supplier evaluation during any formal procurement process. Medway Council reserves the right not to proceed with the procurement. No costs will be reimbursed for participation in this engagement.

Medway Council Market Engagement Briefing

Open Engagement Presentation 14th April 2026 [1000 -12:00]

[Medway Council Open Engagement Teams Link](#)

1. Introduction and Purpose

Medway Council is undertaking Preliminary Market Engagement (PME) in connection with the future procurement of its Highways Infrastructure Contract (HIC). This notice is intended to provide interested organisations with early visibility of the opportunity, share context on Medway's strategic ambitions, and gather market intelligence to help inform and shape the procurement strategy, commercial approach, and contract scope before the formal procurement is launched.

About the PME

This Preliminary Market Engagement (PME) is designed to be open, transparent, and mutually beneficial. Medway Council wishes to engage with Local, Regional and National Suppliers, capable and interested organisations, and to share sufficient context about the opportunity to enable meaningful and informed feedback.

The specific objectives of the PME are to:

- Share information about the contract opportunity, Medway's strategic ambitions, and the key challenges and priorities identified through the Options Appraisal process
- Gauge market interest and appetite across all tiers of the supply chain, including Tier 1 contractors, Tier 2 and regional specialists, local SMEs, and specialist suppliers (including those with tunnel and structures expertise)
- Understand supplier views on the relative attractiveness and deliverability of the contract options under consideration
- Explore commercial preferences, including contract form, pricing models, risk allocation, and performance framework design





- Gather insights on scope for collaboration, framework structures, and sub-contracting approaches
- Understand the market's approach to innovation, digital technology, sustainability, and social value delivery in a highway's context
- Identify any aspects of the opportunity – including scope, term, or procurement structure – that may limit market interest or competitive tension

Medway Council is committed to keeping commercially sensitive information confidential throughout the engagement process and will ensure that no information provided by any supplier during this phase will be used in supplier evaluation during the formal procurement.

About Medway Council - Highways

Medway Council manages a significant highway network asset with a gross replacement value of approximately £2 billion, comprising:

- 845km of adopted highway
- 1,100km (approximately) of adopted footway
- 27,007 streetlights
- 406 bridges and retaining walls
- The Medway Tunnel – a critical asset with a high consequence of failure profile)
- Approximately 91,000 other highway assets including street furniture

The scale, complexity and critical asset profile of Medway's network, including the Medway Tunnel, makes this a significant and technically demanding network to operate and manage. The current term maintenance contract is delivered by Volker Highways and commenced in August 2017. The contract runs to 31st July 2027, creating a clear procurement programme requirement for the successor contract to be in place in advance of this date, with a likely procurement commencement early Summer 2026.

Contract Considerations

The Council are currently considering a number of contract options. These include :

- a traditional term maintenance contract delivered by a single supplier;
- a number of individual single supplier framework Lots;
- a number of individual multiple supplier framework Lots;
- a series of specialist contracts, including variants of the above.

Feedback from interested Suppliers will help shape the approach the Council adopts and provide opportunity for Suppliers to get involved and help Medway as a location and Highways Authority realise its ambitions and potential.



2. Strategic Context

2.1. Medway Council's Ambitions

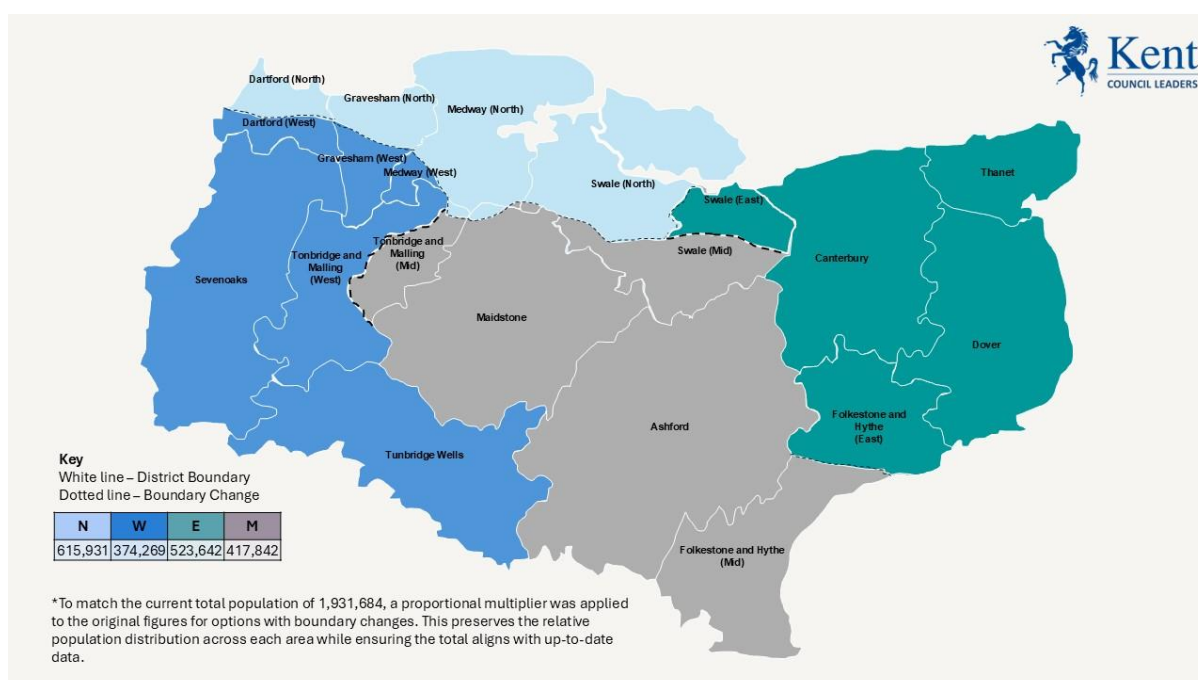
As a Unitary Authority, Medway Council has clear ambitions for innovation-led service transformation, growth, and regional leadership. The Council has a number of key objectives for the future contract including;

- Innovation and digital technology integration, including AI-enabled asset inspection and management systems
- Net Zero commitments and carbon reduction across service delivery
- Local and regional supply chain development delivering significant social value
- Improved governance, transparency, and performance management
- Resilient and evidence-based asset stewardship across a complex network

2.2. Local Government Reorganisation

Medway Council and Kent County Council are currently exploring options around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals. Medway has expressed support for a proposal that could see the region being reorganised into four new unitary authorities, with a North Kent unitary combining Medway, Gravesham, Dartford, most of Swale, and parts of Tonbridge & Malling and Maidstone.

This context is a material factor in the procurement. The future contract will need to be structured with sufficient flexibility, clear data ownership, and governance arrangements capable of adapting to potential structural boundary change. Interested suppliers are encouraged to consider how they would approach this flexibility requirement in their engagement responses.





3. Contract Opportunity Overview

The following table provides a summary of the key contract details as currently expended and provide an indicative guide of what any future potential Total Contract Value could be. These will be refined and confirmed following completion of the Options Appraisal and further financial assessment.

Contract Title	Highways Infrastructure Contract (HIC)
Contracting Authority	Medway Council
Estimated Annual Value	£9m – £11m per annum
Estimated Total Contract Value	£90m – £110m + Scope for LGR (£130 - £170m)
Tunnel Operations & Maintenance	£1m p.a / +£10m over anticipated contract term
Contract Term	10 years (7+3)
Anticipated Contract Start Date	1 August 2027
Anticipated Contract End Date	31 July 2037 (including full extension)
Likely Contract Form	NEC4 (with variants)
Likely Procurement Route	Competitive Flexible Procedure (CFP) under the Procurement Act 2023
CPV Codes	45200000 50200000 90600000 71000000 73000000





3.1. Scope of Services

The future HIC is expected to encompass a broad range of highways maintenance and associated services, including but not limited to:

- Core Services
 - Reactive Maintenance
 - Emergency Maintenance and Response
 - Drainage Maintenance
 - Winter Service
 - Routine and cyclic maintenance (including cleansing, drainage, and Street Lighting)
- Planned and preventative maintenance programmes
 - Structures maintenance (including bridges, retaining walls)
 - Capital Improvement works, including major and minor works projects
 - Highway asset management support and data management
 - Technology and ITS
- Professional Services and technical advisory (could be integrated)
- Traffic management and network coordination
- Operations and maintenance of the Medway Tunnel – including technology
- Major Works Framework

The Council has not yet made a final decision on the preferred contracting approach. This Market engagement will help shape and validate emerging options, test commercial appetite and deliverability, and gather supplier insights to directly inform the final recommendations and procurement strategy. Interested suppliers are encouraged to share their views on the initial options, including any hybrid or alternative approaches they consider relevant.

The precise scope of the future contract including the boundary between core term maintenance services and capital/planned works is one of the key areas to be considered through the ongoing Options Appraisal and will be a key topic for market engagement discussions.

The Council is considering the scope of the Medway Tunnel operations and maintenance. This could be a specialist procurement outside of the Highways term maintenance contract and the Council is interested in views from Suppliers as to how maintenance and capital improvements for the Tunnel should be best delivered .





4. Engagement Format and Programme

4.1. Open Virtual Workshop

Medway Council will host an open virtual Market Engagement Workshop during the week commencing 13th April 2026. The precise date and time will be confirmed upon registration – interested organisations should register their interest using the contact details provided in Section 6 of this notice to receive workshop invitations and joining instructions.

The workshop will be open to all interested suppliers across all tiers and will cover:

- Background to Medway Council and its strategic context for the procurement
- Overview of the current HIC, network profile, and key assets (including the Medway Tunnel)
- Summary of the contract options in-scope and key considerations for the future contract landscape.
- Medway's approach to social value, sustainability, innovation, and digital technology
- Indicative procurement timetable and anticipated process, including the Competitive Flexible Procedure
- Open Q&A session

The workshop is intended to provide all interested organisations with a consistent and transparent briefing on the opportunity before any further engagement sessions take place.

4.2. Further Targeted Engagement

A Questionnaire will be provided to all supplier who register and shall complete and return prior to the Engagement Workshop. This questionnaire will provide the Council with important insights that will help to shape the future contract. Suppliers are not obliged to complete the questionnaire and any nil-responses will not be taken into account.

Medway Council may opt to undertake a series of further targeted engagement sessions with interested suppliers on specific contract topics.





4.3. Who Should Register

Medway Council actively welcomes initial engagement from organisations across all tiers of the highway and specialist services supply chain. This includes, but is not limited to:

Organisation Type	Examples / Description
Tier 1 Contractors	National highways maintenance and infrastructure contractors with experience of term maintenance and/or framework delivery at local authority scale.
Tier 2 Regional Contractors	Regional contractors capable of delivering highway maintenance and improvement works across the South East and Medway area.
Specialist Suppliers – Tunnel & Structures	Organisations with specialist competency in tunnel maintenance, mechanical and electrical maintenance, technology, structures inspection and repair, and critical infrastructure resilience.
Local SMEs and Supply Chain Partners	Local and regional businesses including small and medium-sized enterprises capable of contributing to the delivery of highways services across the Medway area.
Planned Works Specialists	Surface dressing, surfacing, and civils contractors experienced in delivering planned highway improvement programmes under framework or call-off arrangements.
Professional Services	Organisations who could deliver specialist support services such as design, management and resource augmentation – which may be delivered through one of the contracts.
Technology and Innovation Providers	Organisations offering digital, data, AI, or technology-led solutions relevant to highways asset management, inspection, or service delivery.

Organisations that are primarily interested in sub-contracting or supply chain opportunities – rather than the primary contract – are equally encouraged to register. Medway Council recognises the importance of local supply chain development as part of the social value and sustainability agenda for the future contract.





5. Procurement Timetable

The following timetable is indicative and subject to change as the Options Appraisal and market engagement activity progresses. It is provided to give interested organisations visibility of the anticipated programme:

Milestone	Indicative Date
Preliminary Market Engagement Notice Published	April 2026
Open Virtual Engagement Workshop	Week commencing 13 th April 2026 (date TBC)
Focussed Supplier Engagement Sessions (TBC)	April – May 2026 (TBC)
Formal Procurement Launched (CFP)	Estimated July- 2026 (TBC)
Anticipated Contract Award	Spring / Summer 2027 (TBC)
Anticipated Contract Commencement	1 st August 2027





6. How to Register

Interested organisations are invited to register their interest in participating in the market engagement process by contacting Medway Council's procurement advisers using the details below. Upon registering, organisations will receive:

- Confirmation of the workshop date, time, and virtual joining instructions
- A Market Engagement Information Pack providing additional background on the contract opportunity and Medway's strategic context
- Supplier Questionnaire details and when to expect this information
- Details of further targeted engagement sessions and how these may be delivered against specific topic areas

Registration is open to all organisations regardless of size, tier, or nature of interest. There is no obligation to bid as a result of registering, and registration is not a prerequisite to participating in any future formal procurement process.

Register Your Interest

Contact: Nigel Ford | Procurement Category Manager

Email: nigel.ford@medway.gov.uk

Or

Contact: Ryan Smith | Highways Lead

Email: ryan.smith@foundsgroup.co.uk

Please include your organisation name, contact details, and a brief description of your area of interest when registering.





7. Important Notes

- This notice is not a call for competition. It does not initiate a formal procurement process and places no obligation on Medway Council to proceed with any procurement.
- Participation in this market engagement exercise is entirely voluntary and is not a prerequisite for participation in any subsequent formal procurement.
- No information provided during this engagement will be used in the evaluation or assessment of suppliers during the formal procurement process.
- Medway Council will manage all engagement activity in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 to ensure a fair, transparent, and non-distortive process.
- The Council anticipates launching the formal procurement under the Competitive Flexible Procedure (CFP) in Autumn 2026, subject to completion of the Options Appraisal and internal governance approvals.
- No costs incurred by organisations in connection with this market engagement will be reimbursed by Medway Council.
- Medway Council reserves the right to modify or withdraw this notice at any time and to vary the engagement programme as the procurement strategy develops.

