



Request for Information

NoWCard Concessionary Travel System (Managed Service)



1 Request for Information (RFI)

We would like to notify you of an upcoming requirement, and by doing so we are keen to understand where the market stands in terms of our future requirements.

The contact person for this RFI is James Bennett, Procurement and Commercial Manager at Lancashire County Council. Contact details,

- Telephone Number: 01772 539970
- Email Address: digitalprocurement@lancashire.gov.uk

Please note the following general conditions:

- This RFI will help us to refine the requirements and make key decisions for the next stage of the procurement process, including whether the Council continues via the Competitive Flexible Procedure.
- Nothing shall constitute a commitment to ordering and our intention is to undertake an Invitation to Tender to ascertain the most advantageous tender.
- Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to a RFI must be borne by the potential managed service provider. We will not contribute in any way to meeting production costs of any response.
- Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from us.
- No down-selection of potential managed service providers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this RFI.
- We expect that all responses to this RFI will be provided by potential managed service providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
- No information provided by a potential managed service provider in response to this RFI will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the potential managed service provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.

Timetable

The following is indicative timetable for this RFI process

Dates	Activity
3 rd October 2025	Publication of RFI
30 th October 2025	Deadline for RFI submissions
November & December 2025	RFI analysis
January 2026	Confirm next steps to RFI interested bidders



Questions and clarifications

- Interested managed service providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this RFI document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted via the general contact point above.
- To ensure that all potential managed service providers have equal access to information regarding this Procurement, responses to questions raised by any potential service providers may be published in a questions and answers document, which will be available via email.
- Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question nor any confidential aspects of the question that may also identify the originator.

2 Background

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks information relating to the managed service of the NoWcard concessionary travel system. NoWcard is a transport smart card pass, most commonly for the elderly or disabled, available for use in Cumberland, Westmorland & Furness, Lancashire County Council (LCC), Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool administrative areas. It is administered by LCC on behalf of all NoWcard members with the smart card recording journey details and verifies eligibility for the concessionary travel.



Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council was formed as a unitary authority in 1998. As a unitary authority, the council has both the powers of a non-metropolitan county and district council combined, servicing a population of 155,762 residents. Further information about Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council can be found at: <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/>



Blackpool Council is the unitary local government authority for the Borough of Blackpool, providing a wide range of services to its local population of approximately 142,000 people. Further information about Blackpool Council can be found at: <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/>



Cumberland Council is a unitary council responsible for all local authority services for the area of Cumberland, which covers an area of 3,012 square kilometres and has a population of 276,876. Further information about Cumberland Council can be found at: <https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/>

Lancashire County Council ('LCC') is the fourth largest local authority in England, employing approximately 35,000 staff. It serves a population of 1.1 million which is rich in cultural diversity and covers an area of 3,070 square kilometres. Further information about



Lancashire County Council can be found at:
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk>

Westmorland and Furness Council is England's third-largest unitary authority by geographical area covering 3,754 square kilometres and a population of 225,385. Further information about Westmorland and Furness Council can be found at:
<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/>

LCC wish to engage a managed service provider to supply and maintain an ITSO (Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation) compliant NoWcard system, which is composed of the following components;

1. Asset Management System - Host Operator Processing System (AMS – HOPS)
2. ITSO Secure Application Module (ISAM) management
3. Cardholder and Card Management System (CMS) – English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) and Commercial Schemes
4. On-line application (web portal) – integration of ENCTS and existing commercial CMS
5. Print and Dispatch

The AMS-HOPS is the central component within the Council's ITSO smart ticketing solution. The future managed service provider would be expected to provide the following,

- Supplier and end user liaison and management (regular account meetings)
- Issue management
- Standard HOPS monitoring, transaction and batch management
- HSAM & Perso management
- ITSO support – key rollovers etc
- Hotlist and Actionlist management
- Weekly reports

The ISAM management is the secure smart card used at a Point of Service Terminals (POSTs), like a bus ticket machine or transport barrier, and communicates to the HOPS back office system. The future managed service provider would be expected to provide the following,

- Supplier and end user liaison and management (regular account meetings)
- Issue management
- Standard HOPS monitoring, transaction and batch management
- Profile management and updates
- Maintain asset register

- ITSO support – Key rollovers etc

The CMS system and online web portal will manage both the ENCTS and commercial ITSO based smart ticketing schemes. The future managed service provider would be expected to provide the following,

- Supplier and end user liaison and management (regular account meetings)
- Configuration for the NoWcard scheme
- Daily system monitoring
- Issue management
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and live systems required
- UK GDPR and accessibility compliance
- Output to print and dispatch
- Report package, as specified by NoWcard
- ITSO support – Interoperable Product Entities (IPEs)
- CMS to offer commercial products and services
- Secure storage facility for uploaded documents, with the facility to remove expired documents
- Process payments for replacement NoWcards

A print and dispatch (card bureau) managed service is also required from the managed service provider. The service is to be designed to support the NoWcard members and transport operations in the production and distribution of ITSO smartcards that may include ENCTS, commercial travel schemes, youth and education travel cards and multi-operator and multi-modal products. The future managed service provider would be expected to provide the following,

- Scoping of the scheme requirements
- Manage the card and production creation required by NoWcard
- Output from the CRM
- NoWcards to meet the ENCTS and ITSO standards
- Card design and test cards
- Customer letter printing and card fixing to letters
- Report package, as specified by NoWcard

The Council is aware that there are limited managed service providers currently available in the UK but are open to Consortiums or simultaneous competition. Interested managed service providers should identify their preferred approach as part of their RFI response and indicate anything the Council can do to support your future bid. The following are a few examples of bidding models available to interested suppliers;

- Simultaneous Competition - where a supplier is affiliated to more than one bidding model for example; Consortia, Subcontracting arrangements, Special purpose vehicles, or as an Individual Tenderer. Interested supplier must ensure that such arrangements do not detract from its ability to service any

contracts awarded in the event that it is successful in being appointed under more than one bidding model.

- Consortium – where a group of suppliers come together specifically for the purpose of bidding. It is recognised that the future managed service provider need not necessarily be a single economic operator and that potential suppliers may wish to partner up to jointly provide the Services required.
- Subcontracting – where a group of suppliers come together specifically for the purpose of bidding, but where one supplier takes the lead as the managed service provider and the remaining members of that group will be subcontractors.