



## **Quotes are invited to commission research to test need and demand for innovative workspace options in Shropshire.**

### **1. Background**

Shropshire Council is working together with the University of Chester (University Centre Shrewsbury) to commission this work to support the development of potential European Regional Development Fund projects. The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership has part funded the work to support specific feasibility studies or related plans that will serve to advance the development of projects that could benefit from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds.

The University Centre Shrewsbury aims to create an eco-system for inclusive, sustainable growth through the provision of a new physical space in Shrewsbury offering access to expertise, equipment and services. To support this aim, the findings of the initial feasibility work undertaken will inform the preparation of a separate study to be commissioned by the University of Chester, specifically to establish the feasibility of creating an innovation laboratory /incubation function and options appraisal at identified sites in the centre of Shrewsbury leading to identification of a preferred site.

The wider findings of the combined feasibility studies will also provide the evidence base to support potential applications to ERDF for grant support to promote entrepreneurship through the targeted provision of land and premises including incubator space, managed workspace or grow on space at employment sites within Oswestry and at Shrewsbury Sustainable Urban Expansion (SUE) West. Details of sites will be shared following selection of the appointed consultant.

The established Marches Growth Hub Shropshire currently offers face-to-face advice from pre-start to established businesses and signposts businesses to its extensive business support network. The findings of the feasibility study will identify any specific gaps in existing business support activities, which would complement tailored workspace provision. As part of the study, Shropshire Council would like to identify any prospective business support partners to engage with in discussions for potential ERDF applications.

The Business Incubators and Accelerators report commissioned by BEIS and the Grow-on Space report commissioned by Shropshire Council highlight the need for the development of tailored business accommodation and support, and identify avenues for further work, which this study will build upon. A copy of the grow-on space study will be made available to the successful consultant.

## 2. Objectives

The key purposes of the commissioned work are to undertake a Feasibility Study to:

- test the need and demand for specific business workspace and associated business support activities, and
- appraise and assess viability of options.

The initial findings will inform a detailed options appraisal on innovation laboratory / incubation workspace in Shrewsbury. Partners in considering the preparation of outline applications for ERDF will use the outcomes of the wider study as supporting evidence of need and demand.

## 3. Work Activities

This study will build on recent local and national studies to test the need and demand for particular workspace and provide an analysis of business requirements broken down by the stage of the business and by sector.

Work activities anticipated will include:

- Identification of (national and international) exemplars of innovative workspace and best practice which could be developed by Shropshire Council and the University Centre Shrewsbury
- Testing the need and demand for different types of workspaces including innovation labs, co-living spaces, co-working spaces, incubation and grow-on space etc. within Shropshire
- Undertaking an options appraisal of such workspaces including specifically innovation labs and workspace for entrepreneurial ideas and start-ups in Shrewsbury town, and more developed workspace such as incubation space, managed workspace and grow-on space at the key employment sites at Oswestry and Shrewsbury SUE West
- Identification of the requirements of businesses / pre-start-ups
- Testing the demand for specific business support activities to complement such workspace and identify the gaps in existing business support.

The study will ensure that:

- The provision of space cannot be met by existing supply through the testing of likely demand, and
- The proposed programme of support is tailored to the needs of the target occupants and aligns with / complements existing support activities.

This feasibility study will also identify the requirements of businesses including:

- **Stage of business**

For example, pre-start up, start-up, early stage venture, later stage venture, etc.

- **Business space**

Identify demand for different types of workspace such as incubator, managed workspace, co-working, grow-on space etc.

- **Sector specific requirements**

The University Centre Shrewsbury has identified it's focus on establishing areas of excellence in Environmental Science & Technology and Medicine, Health Sciences & Care; catalysed through a third specialism of Digital Innovation. The findings of the study will inform the location, scale and development options of the proposed new physical space in Shrewsbury and its offer in terms of access to expertise, equipment and services.

The sectors identified by Shropshire Council, where there is growth potential in Shropshire, includes:

- Advanced manufacturing including engineering, agri-food and agri-tech
- Food and drink processing
- Health and social care
- Visitor economy (and heritage based businesses)
- Environmental science and technologies
- Creative and digital industries

The Marches LEP research on priority sectors once released will be fed into this work to test the idea for a proximity cluster for medical technologies and the emerging digital health sector.

- **Business facilities**

Specific facilities required e.g. laboratory space. Likely location for specific facilities and optimal size.

- **Business support**

The study will identify business requirements such as mentoring, access to investors, workshops, funding advice, direct funding, access to experts (academics) etc. This will identify any gaps in existing support and inform the options for the delivery of business support activities to complement the workspace selections.

- **Delivery, development and management model**

The study will identify the model options for each business space types including incubation, managed workspace, grow-on space etc.

#### **4. Quote Requirements**

The quote should include:

- A clear statement of how the supplier will execute the work, including a timetable for the work, methodology for undertaking the work activities and provide a programme of work covering all the key activities described above.
- Breakdown of costs against the programme of activities

- The number of working days that will be undertaken in the delivery of the work and day rates of the individuals
- A detailed and itemised breakdown of all other costs
- Brief details of previous experience of similar commissions.
- Details of staff to be deployed, their roles, experience, qualifications and hourly rates
- A minimum of two appropriate client referees
- The fee proposal, including the fixed price quote.

**The quotation must include:**

- The company's address, telephone number and a contact name
- The VAT number if the supplier is VAT registered
- The company's company registration number

**Timescales**

- The deadline for the submission of proposals is 5pm on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017
- The case studies and initial findings relating to the work for the University Shrewsbury Centre needs to be shared by 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to inform the commissioning of the options appraisal work.
- Draft of the final report to be prepared by mid-February, with the final report prepared by 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018.
- Workshop with partners on findings and recommendations to be held in March 2018.

**The proposals and costs (net of VAT) are to include all eligible costs, and be inclusive of all research and engagement costs, travel, project, management and meeting costs.**

Quotes should be submitted by email or posted marked private & confidential, for the attention of:

Mrs Joe Bubb

Project Development Manager

Shropshire Council

Shirehall

Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND

**5. Quote Process/Evaluation**

Shropshire Council reserve the right not to accept any quote as all quotes will be evaluated in line with the following critical selection criteria as follows:-

- Brief fulfilment
- Quality/Presentation
- Value for money
- Experience/Capability
- Feasibility/Deliverability

For more information on the bidding process, contact Mrs Joe Bubb at Shropshire Council on 01743 252516 or [Joe.Bubb@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Joe.Bubb@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **6. Contract**

The contract will be between the company and Shropshire Council (The Council). Shropshire Council's terms and Conditions for the supply of goods and services can be seen here: - <http://shropshire.gov.uk/doing-business-with-shropshire-council/>

Contracts will be signed by Shropshire Council and the company, and will set out any Marches LEP compliance requirements that the supplier will need to adhere to relating to publicity.

Payment on commission with phased payments against delivery evidenced by itemised invoices will be considered. All invoices must be addressed to Joe Bubb, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.

## **7. Insurance and Indemnity**

Shropshire Council's General Terms and Conditions for the supply of goods, services and works requires a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance and £2 million Professional Indemnity. Please identify the Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance in place.