

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND CFO SERVICES

I am pleased to invite tenders for the provision of **Financial Management Support Services and CFO Services** to Raleigh Learning Trust. The specification can be found in **section 2**.

RLT is a multi-academy trust of five alternative provision, special school and mainstream schools serving an area of historical educational disadvantage in Nottingham City with a pupil population of circa nine hundred with an additional circa one hundred and seventy commissioned into external alternative provisions and employee count of around three hundred and thirty as of the date of this invitation.

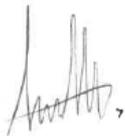
Please read the instructions on the tendering procedures carefully, which can be found in **section 3**. Failure to comply with them may invalidate your tender, which **must** be returned by the date and time given below.

Your tender should be sent electronically to claire.beardsall@raleighlearningtrust.co.uk no later than **5:00pm on Friday, 26th February 2021**.

If having read the enclosed specification you decide not to submit a tender, I would welcome any feedback you might have.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Sean Kelly
Chief Executive Officer & Accounting Officer

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1. INTRODUCTION TO RALEIGH LEARNING TRUST (RLT) AND DETAILS PERTINENT TO THE TENDER

- 1.1 Raleigh Learning Trust (referred to herein as the “Trust”) was established on 1 April 2017. The Trust is both a company limited by guarantee, registered at Companies House (Company Number 10611866) and, by virtue of its charitable object “to.... advance, for the public benefit, education in the United Kingdom by establishing schools” is a charity. The Trust is not a registered charity but an “exempt” charity, regulated by the Secretary of State for Education, who acts as the principal regulator.
- 1.2 The Trust promotes the entitlement and life chances of pupils in disadvantaged communities. The Trust has extensive experience of developing and continually improving alternative provision, special and mainstream schools.
- 1.3 The Trust operates a centralised finance, HR and support role for schools and offers challenge by establishing collaborative structures and processes to enable and share good practice.
- 1.4 As of the date of this tender, the Trust currently of five schools and acts as the alternative provision commissioner on behalf of Nottingham City Council, networking with circa twenty four alternative education providers.
- 1.5 Further information about the Trust and its constituent schools can be found on our website: www.raleighlearningtrust.co.uk.

1.6	Trust Address:	Raleigh Learning Trust, c/o Ambleside Primary Academy, Minver Crescent, Nottingham NG8 5PN
1.7	Contact Number:	0115 8550100
1.8	Company Number:	10611866
1.9	Date of Incorporation:	1 April 2017
1.10	Chair of the Board:	Mrs Eileen Hartley
1.11	Chair of Finance, Audit & Resource Committee:	Ms Gloria Spencer
1.12	Chief Executive Officer & Accounting Officer:	Mr. Sean Kelly
1.13	Accounting Period:	1 September to 31 August
1.14	Accounting System:	PS Financials

1.15	Payroll:	Managed Service: SAAF Payroll
1.16	Funding:	Forecast annual funding for 2020 / 2021 is c£16 million
1.17	Number of employees:	c231
1.18	Number of pupils:	c900
1.19	Number of academies:	5 (as of October 2020), plus c24 commissioned alternative education providers

Mainstream:

- Ambleside Primary Academy

Pupil Referral Unit:

- Denewood Academy
- Unity Academy

Special:

- Westbury Academy
- Woodlands Academy

Nottingham City Council Alternative Education commissioner:

- Commissioner to c24 alternative education providers

2. SPECIFICATION

2.1 SCOPE

- 2.1.1 The Trust are looking to appoint a firm of Accountants to deliver **Managed Bookkeeping, Accountancy and CFO** services as outlined in this specification.
- 2.1.2 The successful tenderer will demonstrate a high level of capacity, experience and commitment in all or most of the areas listed below and will be asked to advise and undertake work on these areas throughout the year.
- 2.1.3 The successful tenderer will support the Trust in establishing a common and consistent framework of policies and procedures which meet both the **Academies Financial Handbook** and **Education and Skills Funding Authority** requirements.
- 2.1.4 The successful tenderer will have **expertise in the education section**, with **specific understanding of multi-academy trusts**.

2.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.2.1 The Provider shall treat all information and discussions as confidential and communicate only with authorised Trust staff. The provisions of the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) shall apply to any data and information shared, and UK law shall prevail.
- 2.2.2 Please note the following requirements. You must not:
 - 2.2.2.1 Tell anyone else what your tender price is or will be, before the time limit for delivery of tenders.
 - 2.2.2.2 Try to obtain any information about anyone else's tender or proposed tender before the time limit for delivery of tenders.
 - 2.2.2.3 Make any arrangements with another organisation about whether or not they should tender, or about their or your tender price.
- 2.2.3 Failure to comply with these conditions might disqualify your tender.

2.3 SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED AND SPECIFICATION

FINANCE DEPARTMENT AND FUNCTIONS

The outsourced service will be expected to take on all the functions necessary to deliver on the expectations of a fully outsourced central finance department with the exception of 1 FTE finance Officer. Duties and responsibilities are including but not limited to

- Supporting the Trust in making all strategic financial decisions and attend Finance, Audit & Resource and Board Committee meetings when required.
- Provide a fully outsourced finance function to the Trust must include the following
 - - Support setting the annual budget
 - Completion of statutory returns to the ESFA/DfE
 - Chase outstanding debt
 - Reconcile income with pupil data
 - Payroll Posting
 - Balance sheet reconciliations
 - Month end closedowns with supporting evidence
 - Identify missing income and invoice accordingly
 - Bank reconciliations
 - VAT returns completed monthly
 - Provide full technical and user training on the accounting software (PS Financials)
 - Ensure workflows are maintained to deliver efficient purchasing processes across the Trust
 - Capital Fund accounting
 - Wages reconciliation
 - Grant reclaims to ESFA
 - Work alongside External Auditors for the preparation of the year-end financial statements including production of the year end accounting disclosures
 - Strategic financial monitoring support for individual academy's and Trust
 - Continue to implement robust and evidential based accounting processes
 - Attendance at meetings once a month to provide updates on progress
 - Re-configure PS Financials accounting structure to simplify processing
 - Re-design workflow to meet with change in authorisation process as required
 - Setup the budgets within accounting system
 - Provide development and support handover back to the in-house academy team
 - Prepare/post all year-end adjustments (accruals/prepayments etc)
 - Ensure the CEO and FA&R sub-committee are kept up to date with any changes to financial legislation that would impact on the school's financial position.
 - Monitor compliance against the Academies Financial Handbook

When required act as liaison between the Trust and central or local government in relation to all statutory requirements and technical funding queries.

The Provider shall tender for the provision of the following services to the Trust and constituent academies at the appropriate level:

2.3.1 COMPLETE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

2.3.1.1 ACADEMIES FINANCE SPECIALIST

- Provide Strategic Finance Leadership support to the Trust;
- Provide Financial Management expertise to the Trust in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Academy Financial Handbook;
- Support the Accounting Officer to meet all obligations in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook;
- Enable a highly effective and efficient Centralised Finance Function for the Trust

2.3.1.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING

- Full Management Accountant Service for Trust and all constituent Schools.

2.3.1.3 BOOKKEEPING SERVICE

- Complete Financial Accounting Services
- Daily Bookkeeping
- BACS Runs
- Supplier Accounts Reconciliation and all supplier queries
- Preparation of all bank reconciliations each week;
- Preparation and reconciliation of monthly VAT returns.

2.3.2 CFO SERVICES [subject to ESFA approval]

- To deliver the strategic and operational financial controls and procedures
- To provide technical expertise to the Trust Board, management and staff across the Trust

- To provide leadership of all finance, audit and controls at the Trust
- To produce and deliver on the Trust business plan and ensure financial recovery

Duties & Responsibilities

The CFO Service will be expected to take on the role as required in the Academies Financial Handbook. This is including but not limited to the following

- Manage School and Trust finances - Promote a culture of innovation and challenge in transforming financial performance, undertakes the Head of Profession role for Finance.
- Develop and implement strategy to resource and deliver the school's/Trust's strategic objectives - Develop and lead a long-term financial planning process to support the school/Trust in achieving strategic outcomes.
- Influence business/finance decisions - Ensure effective budget allocation processes are in place to achieve the financial strategy and that risks are identified and managed.
- Ensure effective and proactive performance monitoring procedures are in place to deliver the financial strategy
- Ensure that key strategic decisions are taken with a full understanding of the financial implications and that effective stewardship of public funds is maintained
- Ensure that key strategic decisions are taken with a full understanding of the financial implications and that effective stewardship of public funds is maintained
- Produce accurately costed option analyses and business cases to support major decisions.
- Ensure colleagues understand and operate within financial procedures in relation to business decisions, providing training and support as necessary
- Ensure colleagues understand and operate within financial procedures in relation to business decisions, providing training and support as necessary
- Lead the promotion of good financial management
- Develop and implement financial management policies to underpin sustainable long-term financial health and demonstrate robust assurance.
- Assume ultimate responsibility for financial reporting, including an annual statement of accounts, and ensures that all reporting adheres to the requirements of the law and financial reporting standards
- Ensure that the right skills are in place to support effective financial management throughout the school/Trust and that appropriate training takes place

- Lead and direct the finance function so that it makes a full contribution to, and meets the needs of, the school/Trust
- Develop a detailed asset register
- Manage disposal/acquisition of school/Trust assets.
- Oversee and report on detailed options and cost–benefit analysis to provide assets that meet service needs and provide the best value for money, e.g. collaborative procurement
- Specify, commission and manage external contracts, agreements and SLAs
- Understand and evaluate alternative strategies to develop school’s/Trust’s estate and options for funding strategy selected
- Manage the procurement strategy, ensures it is kept under regular review and up to date to ensure value for money is maintained
- Evaluate benchmarking data, e.g. from the DfE, to inform procurement decisions and to plan resources and procurement priorities
- Recognise and acknowledge the importance of obtaining three quotes and having to undertake a full EU/UK compliant tendered procurement process as required
- Assess the appropriateness of collective buying consortia arrangements for the school/Trust.
- Prepare specifications and manages invitation-to-tender documents and subsequent process to ensure value for money.
- Manage contract administration, and provides direction for the development of SLAs to assist with contract renegotiations.

2.3.3 OTHER WORK WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED

- Other ad-hoc services as required
- Taxation advice as required
- VAT advice as required

2.4 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

2.4.1 The successful tenderer will be asked to provide management information to meet the needs of the Trust. The successful tenderer may be asked to provide a monthly statement of work undertaken and to respond to all reasonable requests for information from time to time.

2.5 SECURITY OF DATA

2.5.1 Please indicate how your firm will ensure the security and confidentiality of the information provided to it. In particular, the successful tenderer will be

expected to demonstrate a high level of security where sensitive personal data or highly sensitive information about the Trust are shared. A copy of your data protection policy must be provided. A Data Protection Impact Assessment may also be required.

2.6 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

2.6.1 Please state how conflicts of interest will be managed, for example where your firm is retained by both parties to a transaction.

2.7 COSTS

2.7.1 Please give a detailed breakdown of proposed costs, including any discount arrangements and details in relation to VAT.

2.8 RELEVANT REGISTRATIONS AND INDEMNITIES

2.8.1 Please provide evidence of how your firm meets obligations in respect of relevant registrations and indemnities specific to the sector.

2.9 OTHER

2.9.1 Please highlight any opportunities or support offered by your firm to add value to your relationship with clients.

3. INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION ON TENDERING PROCEDURES

These instructions are designed to ensure that all tenders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important therefore that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified. Please contact claire.beardsall@raleighlearningtrust.co.uk if you have any doubts as to what is required or you have difficulty in providing the information requested.

Tenders will only be considered if they provide competitive prices strictly in accordance with the brief.

The Trust may request additional information as part of the bid clarification process to enable the Trust to better understand the Tenderer's bid.

Please note: The Board of Trustees expect to appoint the successful firm at their meeting on **31/03/2021**.

Although we do not expect tenderers to visit the Trust, we offer the opportunity to conduct a site visit. If you would like to arrange a site visit, please contact wendy.mcpherson@raleighlearningtrust.co.uk.

3.1 CONTRACT PERIOD AND COMMENCEMENT

3.1.1 The contract is to be for a period of **one year**, with a possible extension of **two years, subject to annual review**.

3.1.2 The contract will have an early termination clause of **three months'** notice by either party.

3.1.3 The contract will commence on **1st September 2021**.

3.2 INCOMPLETE TENDER

3.2.1 Tenders may be rejected if the information asked for in the ITT and Specification is not given at the time of tendering.

3.3 RETURNING TENDERS

3.3.1 Please submit your tender electronically by emailing claire.beardsall@raleighlearningtrust.co.uk. The Trust will send a confirmation of receipt.

3.3.2 Tenders must be received before **5pm on Friday, 26th February 2021**.

3.3.3 Submissions received after the deadline **will not** be considered.

3.3.4 Tenderers should ensure that they allow enough time to submit their bid response. **The Trust will accept no responsibility for difficulties during the process of submission and / or late or lost submissions.**

3.4 ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS

3.4.1 By issuing this invitation the Trust is not bound in any way and does not have to accept the lowest, or any tender and reserves the right to accept a portion of any tender, unless the tenderer expressly stipulates otherwise in their tender.

3.5 INDUCEMENTS

3.5.1 Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other contract with the Trust will disqualify your tender from being considered and might constitute a criminal offence.

3.6 REFERENCES

3.6.1 Tenders will include the names, addresses and contact details for two Referees, one of which should be ideally within a Multi-Academy Trust setting.

3.7 COSTS AND EXPENSES

3.7.1 You **will not** be entitled to claim from the Trust any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing your tender, regardless of whether or not your tender is successful.

3.8 DEBRIEFING

3.8.1 Following the award of contract, debriefing will be offered in the letter sent to unsuccessful tenderers.

3.9 EVALUATION CRITERIA

3.9.1 All tenders will be subject to a detailed evaluation process which will be based on an appropriate balance between technical expertise and a firm commitment to meeting all of the Trust's requirements. The Trust will select the best value for money tender using a price:quality ratio of 60:40, taking into consideration the following factors:

- Technical expertise;

- Commitment to working with the Trust to enhance the service offered;
- Cost;
- Proven experience of working within the Academy Trust sector; and - Bid quality/compliance.

Please note: the above criteria are not listed in relative order of importance.

3.10 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

3.10.1 The Trust is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Accordingly, all information submitted to the Trust might need to be disclosed in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm might result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. You should be aware that, even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, we may still be required to disclose it under the Act if a request is received. Please also note that the receipt of any material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the Trust should not be taken to mean that we accept any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking.

3.10.2 The tenderer will need to provide as part of their submission a contact within their organisation should we need to consult on a Freedom of Information request. Should we be unable to contact anyone to consult, we may have to release the information to ensure we remain compliant with the 20-working day deadline.

3.11 TENDER PERIOD

3.11.1 This tender shall remain open for acceptance by the Trust and will not be withdrawn by us for a period of 3 months from the date fixed for return.

3.12 BASIS OF THE CONTRACT

3.12.1 The Trust will enter into formal Terms of Engagement with the successful tenderer.

3.13 TIMETABLE

3.13.1 This timetable is provisional and may be subject to change but will be adhered to by the Trust as far as reasonably possible.

Invitation	25/01/2021
Clarification period	01/02/2021 – 05/02/2021
Submission deadline for receipt of bids	5pm, 26/02/2021
Evaluation of tenders	03/03/2021
Tender panel decision	13/03/2021
Business case with panel recommendation submitted to ESFA for final approval	18/03/2021
Spring Board ratification	31/03/2021
Contract mobilisation	April to August 2021
Start date of contract	01/09/2021

3.14 INFORMATION REQUIREMENT AND FORMAT OF BIDS

3.14.1 Tenderers should present their proposals in the following format:

3.14.1.1 Table of Contents

3.14.1.2 Management Summary

3.14.1.3 About the Firm

- Briefly outline your firm/company's credentials to undertake Managed Bookkeeping, Accountancy and CFO of the Raleigh Learning Trust
- Demonstrate your firm/company's experience of the above services for:
 - Multi-Academy Trusts
 - Academies
 - Alternative Provision and SEN schools
 - Other education establishments
 - Companies with charitable status

3.14.1.4 About the Personnel

- Please specify the senior personnel who would be assigned to the team and their work base/office

location – please provide a simple team organisation structure.

- Please provide a brief curriculum vitae of the proposed Partner/Director heading the Finance (Bookkeeping and Accountancy) team and the proposed CFO for the Trust.
- Details of the expertise, experience and location of any specialist charity teams in your organisation.
- Would the Partner/Director visit the Trust for important meetings and be available to discuss wider issues as they arise during the year?
- How the firm's relevant experience of the sector will be brought to bear on the Trust's Finance and audit

3.14.1.5 Your Approach

- Basic approach for Bookkeeping and Accountancy and to the CFO provision and timing,
- Detailed analysis of the proposed time required to deliver the service outlined in this tender including breakdown on hierarchy of staff against the different components
- Appreciation of key features of the academy's Financial Management and audit
- What is expected of the Trust
- Method of reporting to Trustees and Members
- Statement confirming your approach to conflicts of interest and relationships.

3.14.1.6 Meeting the Specification

3.14.1.7 Cost and Charging Arrangements

3.14.1.7.1 The Trust requires an itemised proposal of full year costs where different rates are applicable to different audits or to different personnel. The CFO service is subject to ESFA approval so all costing **must be** split between the 2 services.

3.14.1.7.2 The tenderer must submit details of any price changes in future years e.g. price plus inflation, RPI, CPI etc.

3.14.1.7.3 The tenderer must state the hourly rate for each person for any additional works.

- 3.14.1.7.4 All pricing submitted is to include all costs inclusive of any anticipated expenses.
- 3.14.1.7.5 Please confirm that fees quoted are fixed and inclusive of expenses and disbursements for the first full year.

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