

LOT 1 PART D – RESPONDING TO CORRESPONDENCE SPECIFICATION

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1. General Requirements

- 1.1. The Contractor is to provide a correspondence answering service when, for whatever reason, the Council's in house team are unable to answer all items within the Council's required timescales. The service is therefore an ad-hoc service; no continuity of work can be guaranteed. However, if realistic assessments are made there should never be an excessive volume of work passed over.
- 1.2. This correspondence answering service will only be required to deal with the first 'informal' correspondence or 'challenge' against a particular case, ie:-
 - a. For PCNs affixed to the vehicle, correspondence received prior to the issue of a Notice to Owner
 - b. For Parking related CCTV PCNs, correspondence received prior to the issue of a Notice to Owner
 - c. For Bus Lane related CCTV PCNs, correspondence received prior to the issue of an Enforcement Notice.
- 1.3. The service will not be required to deal with Moving Traffic related CCTV PCNs, formal complaints or more general enquiries.
- 1.4. The Contractor is to use the Council's IT system, ICPS, as provided by Traffic Support Mouchel Parkman. This as facilities to compose, record and print all outgoing correspondence and will ensure that all information related to a PCN is on the same database for reference should the case proceed to subsequent stages of the process.
- 1.5. The Contractor shall provide his own PC equipment and link into the ICPS system. The Council's IT department and IT Contractor shall provide the Router and all connections to the server within the Council's premises.

2. Receipt of cases to be answered

- 2.1. On a daily basis the Council's Processing Manager or deputy will examine that days incoming correspondence and progress with existing correspondence allocated to the Council. He will use this information to assess the number of cases (if any) that the Council will have difficulty in completing within required timescales. He will then transfer these cases to the Contractor's workflow inbox in the ICPS workflow module from where the Contractor's Processing Manager will be able to identify and access the workload in ICPS.

3. Timescale for Answer

- 3.1. The Contractor shall answer all challenge letters within 5 working days excluding the day the case is entered into the Contractor's workflow inbox. If a complete answer cannot be sent within 5 working days then a holding reply shall be sent and full reply sent within a further 5 working days. The Council's Processing Manager is to be sent a list on a daily basis of any such cases. If after 10 working days the Contractor is still not able to send a response, this is to be drawn to the Council's Processing Manager's attention within 1 working day.

4. Investigation of Challenge

- 4.1. The Contractor will conduct such investigations as are required to reasonably reach the correct conclusion and reply fully to each letter.

- 4.2. The Contractor shall read the Challenge fully and carefully in order to identify and understand the reason(s) why the PCN is being challenged
- 4.3. The Contractor shall check, where applicable:
 - a. that the letter is the first challenge against this PCN as subsequent challenges should be dealt with by the Council
 - b. the accuracy and quality of the evidence, including the validity of any new owner or hirer details
 - c. the legislation applicable at the time
 - d. that an image or images are held
 - e. any pattern of similar Challenges for the same vehicle or the same keeper – the Council's Processing Manager shall be alerted to such a pattern and asked for advice on how to proceed
 - f. Any mitigating circumstances or natural justice that would perhaps be considered as the basis for cancellation of the PCN shall be passed to the Council's Processing Manager for approval before the Contractor sends out any letter.
- 4.4. The Council will provide the Contractor with the current policies on acceptable or unacceptable reasons for cancellation from time to time throughout the contract. All staff handling the Council's case shall be trained in these policies and be provided with either the Council's document or an accurate summary thereof.
- 4.5. The Contractor shall make the decision as to whether the Challenge is accepted or rejected.

5. Correspondence Responses

- 5.1. Having investigated the case (or cases) referred to in the challenge and reached a decision on the outcome the Contractor shall write a response letter to the person who challenged the PCN.
- 5.2. The Contractor shall use the standard letter templates also used by the Council correspondence officers as well as the standard paragraphs to deal with specific issues. The Council's Processing Manager will provide guidance on preparing the appropriate response to particular types of correspondence.
- 5.3. Both Council and Contractor staff will be able to write unique paragraphs as required to fully and properly respond to the challenge. These will not be pre-vetted by the Council but the Contractor should collect together those created by his staff and send them to the Council's Processing Manager at the end of each week. Particularly good examples may be added to the standard paragraphs whilst poor examples be identified and guidance given on how the matter should have been addressed.
- 5.4. On no account shall the Contractor or his staff use language or words which might be considered, however tenuously, to be rude, offensive, derogatory or contrary to the principles and practice of equal opportunities.
- 5.5. The Contractor shall use the Parking IT system to produce the letter and ensure that it is associated to the correct PCN. This will ensure that both client and contractor can see each piece of correspondence which will be associated with the case.
- 5.6. Before physically printing the letter, all staff shall preview their completed letters, proof read them, if necessary correct them and ensure that all points raised in the letter have been answered, fairly and informatively.

- 5.7. All staff shall submit their completed letters for printing. In doing so they only need to produce one copy as the IT system will enable the letter to be re-created as it was sent and a hard 'file copy' is therefore not required.
- 5.8. The Contractor and the Council shall sample the outgoing correspondence in order to identify the general quality level and any issues that may need addressing.
- 5.9. The Contractor shall despatch the letter on the day of printing.

6. Staff Requirements

- 6.1. The Contractor shall ensure that all staff handling correspondence are capable of responding using clear, plain English with the correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- 6.2. Correspondence received in a foreign language shall be forwarded to the Council's translation service for translation into English. Once the reply has been formulated this shall also be sent to the Council's translation service for translation back into the original language. The Contractor shall scan both translations into the PCN case.

7. Management Information

- 7.1. The Contractor shall provide the following items of information on a weekly basis for monitoring and a monthly basis for invoicing:-
 - a. The number of letters responded to (ie despatched within the last period, ie week or month) according to:-
 - i. Type – PA, CCTV (Parking), CCTV (Bus Lane)
 - ii. Response Time - <= 2 days, <= 5 days, <=10 days, >10 days
 - b. The number of letters outstanding according to:-
 - i. Type – PA, CCTV (Parking), CCTV (Bus Lane)
 - ii. Time since Received - <= 2 days, <= 5 days, <=10 days, >10 days

8. Method of Measurement

Correspondence Answering : Variable Costs

Item 1 Investigate and Respond

Unit: Number of Challenges. To be paid monthly in arrears in accordance with the level of activity measured.

Item Coverage: The rates and prices inserted shall include for:-

1. Receipt of instructions.
2. Staff time for reading and investigation of case, production of a response and ensuring it is despatched.
3. All equipment, facilities etc to be used by staff such as office space, PCs, links to ICPS
4. All materials such as paper, envelopes, postage
5. Supervision and checking of response accuracy and quality
6. Maintaining records and provision of management information.

Item 2

Unit: Number of Letters. To be paid monthly in arrears in accordance with the level of activity measured.

Item Coverage: The rates and prices inserted shall include for:-

1. Receipt of instructions.
2. Staff time for reading of case, assessing it as beyond the contract scope and returning it to the Council.
3. All equipment, facilities etc to be used by staff such as office space, PCs, links to ICPS
4. Supervision and checking of return assessment
5. Maintaining records and provision of management information.

Bill of Quantities and Schedule of Rates

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	RATE	AMOUNT
1	Investigate a challenge letter and despatch a response				
	a) PA PCN – pre-NtO	Rate only	Letter		
	b) CCTV PCN – pre-NtO (parking)	Rate only	Letter		
	c) CCTV PCN – pre-EN (bus lane)	Rate only	Letter		
2	Return a misdirected letter to the Council	Rate only	Letter		
	TOTAL	Rate only			