

WEBSITE PAGE

Community Right to Challenge

The community right to challenge gives voluntary and community groups the opportunity to express an interest in providing or assisting in running a Council service under Part 5 of the [Localism Act 2011](#). The Council must then consider this expression of interest, and if it is accepted start a procurement process to tender the service.

Who can submit an expression of interest?

The following groups can submit an expression of interest under the community right to challenge:

- Voluntary or community bodies including social enterprises
- Bodies or trusts established for charitable purposes
- Parish Councils
- Two or more Council employees

Timetable

When can my organisation submit an expression of interest?

The Council will consider expressions of interest from relevant groups at the following times:

- If the service is subject to external procurement or commissioning - **at the time the contract is put out to tender**
- If the service is provided directly by the Council - in the two month period of **June to July each year**.

The scheme will run on the following annual cycle, which is linked to the Council's budget process:

- 1) June to July - you express an interest in running a Council service**
This will apply if the service is directly provided by the Council.
Expressions received outside this period will be held back until June in the following year.
- 2) July to December - we decide whether to accept, modify or reject your proposal**
We have a maximum of six months from the date we receive your expression of interest to decide whether to accept it, modify it or reject it. The final decision will be made by the authority's Committee responsible for the service in question, or the Policy Committee which meets monthly.
- 3) December to June - we start a procurement process**
If we accept your proposal, we will start a formal procurement process, following the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules. You will then be able to submit your formal bid to run the service.

Other organisations and companies will have the chance to bid to run the service through this process.

The period between the Committee decision to accept your expression of interest and the start of the procurement process will be between three and six months. The actual timescale followed will depend on each individual service.

Submitting ideas or suggestions

You can submit your ideas and suggestions for how you think your group can improve services delivered by the Council by emailing the Head of Legal & Democratic Services at legal.services@reading.gov.uk.

You must submit your expression of interest in writing. You can download an application form to help you address the things that the Council will need to know when it considers your expression of interest.

Your expression of interest must include the information required by the Localism Act 2011 and its accompanying Regulations.

Where can I find more about the Community Right to Challenge process?

Further details about the framework and procedure used by the Council to assess challenges and expressions of interest can be downloaded below.

What happens after an expression of interest is submitted?

After you have submitted your expression of interest, we will acknowledge it, and notify you in writing within 30 days of the timescale for when the Council will give you its decision. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the complexity of the service, the need to agree any modifications in the expression of interest, the Council's commissioning cycle and its decision-making process.

Your expression of interest will be considered by the responsible Committee or the Policy Committee, at a public meeting which you can attend. The Committee will decide whether to accept, reject or accept it with modifications. If the proposal is to accept your expression of interest with modifications we will consult you and ask for your agreement to modify the expression of interest.

The final decision on whether to accept or reject your expression of interest will be made by the Committee as swiftly as the circumstances allow and, in any event, within 6 months of your submission. You will be told the date in advance of the Committee meeting, and notified of the outcome of this decision within 10 working days of the meeting.

Where can I find more information?

The Reading Borough Council website has documents that set out the Council's purchasing procedures and provide guidance on how to do business with the Council. You can use this link to find out more about existing contracts and forthcoming tendering opportunities: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/procurement> - and then look under 'Do Business with the Council'.

Community and voluntary organisations can find out more about the Council's approach to commissioning services and the work of the Reading Compact Group: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/fundingforlocalgroups>

Central Government has established a Community Rights Web Site that will help organisations submitting expressions of interest under the Community Right to Challenge. The [Community Right to Challenge](#) support programme will include grants to help groups to use the new right and bid to run local services. More help is available on the [My Community Rights](#) support hub.

You can also contact the Head of Legal and Democratic Services at: legal.services@reading.gov.uk,