

Catering Supplier Tender

Brief and Invitation to Tender
Document

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1. Client Details

Contracting Authority	The Postal Heritage Trading Limited (PHTL - 'The Client')
Contact Details	The Postal Museum 15-20 Phoenix Place London WC1X 0DA Website: www.postalmuseum.org Tel: +44 (0) 300 030 0700
Client Contacts	Tish Jayanetti Head of Operations & Commercial Email: tish.jayanetti@postalmuseum.org

2. Tender Brief

2.1 Summary Description and Aims

The Postal Museum (TPM) is seeking to appoint a catering supplier to successfully provide an exciting and varied seasonal food and beverage proposition through the onsite café, that meets the needs of the museum's audiences.

The museum also consists of two unique dry-hire venues. Events vary and include corporate dinners, awards ceremonies, conferences, product launches, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs, filming etc. TPM welcomes suppliers to submit suggestions regarding approach to delivering events catering as part of this tender.

The aims for the catering service are as follows:

- Create a good quality and exciting menu offer, that caters for a variety of dietary requirements throughout the year, and can be enhanced by seasonal items.
- Understand the museum's core and leading audiences.
- Develop an offer that meets the needs of TPM's audiences and provides excellent value for money.
- Work with the museum to develop KPIs that support the café to maximise revenue.
- Offer an efficient service that provides an experience; as an extension of the museum's visitor experience and contributes to enhance the museum's reputation.
- Evidence environmental sustainability actions throughout the café operation that contributes to the museum's [Environmental Sustainability](#) objectives.

- Meet the criteria for the [Kid's in Museums Family Friendly Café Standard](#).
- The museum is a London Living Wage employer and café staff salaries will need to be, as a minimum, maintained at London Living Wage.
- Provide proposals/suggestions for delivering events catering.

2.2 Financial Factors

TPM is aware there may be several approaches to financial arrangements and is open to suggestions. However, all arrangements need to consider the following:

- A minimum term of three years, with the option to extend for a further two years.
- Annual review of performance against agreed KPIs.
- Capital investment sum for new café furniture that is in line with the museum's audience needs, brand guidelines, and enhances the look/feel of the café and welcome space.
- Provide tea/coffee/refreshments for museum Board and organisation-wide meetings at cost to the museum (circa 10 meetings per year).
- A staff discount on agreed menu items.
- Discount for visitors attending museum run access day-events that support local community and social groups.
- Commission thresholds based on the café's net revenue.
- TPM may consider, subject to proposals, exclusivity for events catering. Commission thresholds for events catering would be net revenue on a client's contract value.
- TPM (internal) events catering provided at cost (circa four events per year)
- Both parties agree to a six-month notice period in the event that either party wish to terminate the agreement.
- Assist with the marketing and selling of the events business.
- Contract and service provision to ideally start from 1st April 2024; however, due to the Easter holidays and this date being a Bank Holiday, a suitable timeline is to be proposed.

3. Considerations

3.1 Tender Process Schedule

Activity	Estimated Dates (2024)
Issue of Brief / Invitation to Tender (ITT)	26 th January
Last date for receipt of requests for clarification	2 nd February
Issue of clarification document	7 th February
Closing date and time for receipt of responses to Brief / ITT	16 th February 2pm
Assessment and short-listing of companies for interview	w/c 19 th February
Interviews	27 th - 29 th February
Review catering contract	w/c 4 th March
Contract awarded	w/c 11 th March
Contract start date*	TBD

NB: *1st April is the start of TPM's 2024-25 financial year.

3.2 Submission Requirements

Please submit a brief written response that sets out a plan to deliver the aims of the brief and the financial factors. Also include the following:

- A sample menu, along with prices and potential seasonal additions, e.g. for Christmas.
- Organisational plan that outlines the staff that will deliver and support the café operation.
- Proposed targets and KPIs; including a schedule/approach for monitoring performance.

The tender response should be no longer than 4 x A4 pages, not including attachments.

3.3 Tender Returns

Submissions should be returned via email to Tish Jayanetti, Head of Operations & Commercial – tish.jayanetti@postalmuseum.org. Please ensure that electronic submissions sent as attachments to emails are 8MB or smaller. Submissions in excess of this size should be sent via Dropbox, WeTransfer, or similar file sharing/transfer service.

3.4 Interviews

One-hour interviews are provisionally scheduled from 27th to 29th February 2024 for shortlisted applicants and ideally, need to be conducted in-person at TPM. Subject to panel availability and aforementioned timescale, there may be some flexibility on interview dates.

Shortlisted applicants should present proposals (and hold introductions) for 45 minutes, allowing 15-minutes for questions at the end of the interview.

4. Background Information

4.1 Catering Services to Date

The Café

The café is located within the Welcome Space of the museum's main building (TPM) and has space for approximately 50 covers; provided across two, three and four seating options. The kitchen is small but well equipped and the counter has been improved to maximise the display space to showcase food items and improve stock density. Food is prepared on a daily basis.

Current operational hours mirror the museum's public opening hours, currently Wednesday to Sunday. From 1st April 2024, the museum will open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm to the general public. In holiday periods, this will extend to include Mondays. Security Officers open the buildings for staff access from 7.30am and close the sites at 6pm.

The main equipment items (owned & maintained by TPM) are as follows:

Item	Make/Model	Quantity
Coffee machine	La Marzocco La8	1
Coffee grinder	Mazzer Super Jolly Timer	2
Contact grills	Velox CG-2 Double Smooth	1
	Zyco Pro Double Panini	1
Hot water dispenser	Instanta CPF2100	1
Ice maker/dispenser	Scotsman EC-86	1
Display deli-counter chiller	Counterline	1
Fridges	Williams HA280 267Ltr	1
	Dalmec undercounter (3-door) 350Ltr	1
	Tefcold UR200 Range 120Ltr	1
Freezers	Dalmec undercounter (2-door) 230Ltr	1
	Polar C-Series 365Ltr	1
	Dalmec upright 360Ltr (Mail Rail events kitchen)	1
Ovens	Daewoo KOM-9F85 microwave-oven	1
	Eurofours FBE04T-05 electric convection	2 - stacked
	Rational Combi (Mail Rail events kitchen)	2
Induction Hob	Adventys Lite 2500	2
Mixers/Blenders	Hamilton Beach HBF500S blender	1
	Kitchen Aid K45 mixer	1
Soup Kettle	Buffalo L715 10Ltr	1
Hot Cupboard	Parry HOT15 (Mail Rail events kitchen)	1

Current staffing levels are three full-time staff (Café Manager, Supervisor and Team Member) working on a shift basis. To account for higher visitor numbers, an additional staff member is included in the team.

Since the museum opened in 2017, the café has been an essential part of the visitor experience and has been provided by an external caterer.

Following closure during the pandemic, the café offer was scaled-up throughout 2022 and 2023, a change in staffing, increasing the menu offer, food presentation and operation provided significant improvements.

The pricing structure is developed with the caterer and given the museum's audiences, there is a particular focus on the children's offer being affordable and good value for money, e.g., the kid's lunch box being kept under £5.

At the time of writing, the museum is also working towards the Kid's in Museums Family Café Standard; the museum is intent on achieving the standard and being accredited in January 2024.

For the 2019 calendar year and 2022 financial year, and April to December 2023, the museum's catering revenues are in the table below:

	2019*	2022-23	2023-24 (to end-Dec)
Turnover	£275,414	£146,150	£149,984

NB: *Financial Year data is not available.

Events

The museum has two unique dry-hire venues, that provide the newest venues in London located in each museum building – TPM Welcome Space & adjoining outdoor Courtyard and Mail Rail Depot (includes a Welcome Space and opportunity to hire the trains). TPM Welcome Space & Courtyard is popular in the summer and Mail Rail Depot, in the autumn/winter. Mail Rail is a robust venue and to add to its uniqueness, clients have the opportunity to incorporate train rides through the tunnels during their event. Events vary and include corporate dinners, awards ceremonies, conferences, product launches, Bar & Bat Mitzvahs, filming etc.

The capacities, floor plans and further details of each venue are shown [here](#).

Mail Rail venue hire is charged at £5k and including the hire of two-trains, can total £6.5k. TPM Courtyard venue hire is charged at £2.5k; all rates are plus VAT. Both venues offer differing audio visual and lighting capabilities – Mail Rail is better equipped.

The museum has a list of preferred suppliers for various specialist services in production, furniture hire, floristry, and entertainment; the museum earns commission from all suppliers.

The team consists of a Venue Sales & Events Manager (started mid-December 2023), an Events Officer and Events Coordinator. Since January 2022, the Events Officer & Coordinator roles, have been entirely focused on driving venue hire sales, marketing/promotion and event delivery.

The museum's buildings are at the 'centre' of a property development of 700 flats. The work opposite Mail Rail building is complete and aesthetically, is a significant improvement to the area. The inhabitants of these flats form a major new market for visitors to the museum and potential events.

Since opening, the number of sellable dates range from 130 to 140 per year. This is based on hires being Tuesday to Thursday each month, but includes Fridays in December. In 2019 55 events were delivered, 2022 19 events and in 2023 (April to December) 15 events.

4.2 Museum Strategy – The Forward Plan 2023-2029

In 2017, The Postal Museum opened its new heritage attraction in Central London, with two experiences in one. Alongside the story of British social and communications history, the offer includes a subterranean ride on the old Post Office Underground Railway – Mail Rail. This new museum showcases the extraordinary stories from five centuries of one of the country's most iconic services, has grown its educational charity work and fundamentally changes the way the organisation engages with its audiences.

Who We Are – Mission: The Postal Museum tells the story of postal communication and its impact on a global society.

What We Do – Vision: We use the collection to explore stories around communication, and to inspire everyone to make richer and more meaningful connections in their lives.

Our Values Are:	We Will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness. • Generosity. • Innovation. • Curiosity. • Playfulness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open and generous in spirit and action. • Deliver innovation. • Communicate our stories with clarity and playfulness. • Be curious about people’s stories and experiences.

Strategic Objectives:

- Create welcoming experiences for anybody to connect with the museum and each other.
- Collaborate creatively to deliver content that meets our audience’s needs.
- Look after, develop and be curious about our collection to ensure the story of postal communication is relevant, inspiring and inclusive.
- Minimise the environmental impact of our activities and communicate effectively about our environmental responsibility.
- Develop a sustainable and dynamic business model to enable our work as a charity.

For more detailed information, see *The Postal Museum Forward Plan 2023-29 (attached)*.

4.3 Visitor Numbers

The museum’s visitor numbers are returning to pre-pandemic levels. As at end-November 2023, the museum’s visitor numbers totalled 79,564 (17% ahead of target).

The table below highlights visitor numbers from 2019 onwards:

Year	Visitor Numbers
2019	124,834
2022	93,646
2023-24 ¹	117,114
2024-25 ²	126,924

NB:
¹ April to November actuals and December to March projected numbers.
² Annual projection.

4.4 Museum Audiences, Activities and Estate

Audiences

In 2021, in collaboration with a market research consultancy, TPM undertook a thorough review of its audiences. Visitor data, focus groups, in-depth interviews and a large-scale population survey were used to build a comprehensive picture of current and potential audiences.

Visits to TPM are driven by a combination of the novelty and uniqueness of Mail Rail, and with a desire to spend quality time, have fun and learn with friends and family.

- Adults visiting with children (families) make up the majority of visitors (60%) and are driven by the successful family offer and general interest in days out. Whilst looking for value for money, they tend to value an attraction's catering as a key part their visit.
- Adults visiting without children (independent adults) make up a significant proportion of visitors (40%) and are motivated more by a specialist or nostalgic interest in the subject matter and/or a general interest in museums. Adults, are less concerned about value for money and have a greater propensity to spend; they too view catering as an important aspect of their visit.

Visitors to TPM are very positive about their experiences; many say it exceeded their expectations. Further evidenced by NPS scores that indicate that TPM is becoming a reliable and trusted provider of a quality day out.

Over three 12-month years, 2018, 2019 and 2022 the visitor patterns are as follows:

- Visitor numbers peak during several months that include school holidays.
- August is the busiest single month, closely followed by February, October and April.
- Visitor numbers in December tend to be boosted by the busy period between Christmas and New Year.
- Visitor numbers have been lower during January, May, June, and September.

During 2022, the museum's core opening days (Wednesday to Sunday) the following trends were identified:

- Saturdays (average of 528 visitors) and Sundays (average of 484 visitors) were the busiest days of the week across the year.
- Weekdays were less busy than weekends – with Wednesday the busiest of these (average of 392 visitors), followed by Thursdays (average 361 visitors), and then Fridays (average 333 visitors).

The visitation patterns across the week are clearer when broken down into term-time vs. school holidays periods. These figures include visitor numbers for Tuesdays when the museum was open during school holiday periods:

- Weekdays were busier than weekend days in school holiday periods – averaging 657 visitors on Wednesdays, 651 on Thursdays, 592 on Tuesdays, and 582 on Fridays. This compares to 542 on Saturdays and 504 on Sundays.
- Weekends during term-times are still comparatively busy – with an average of 516 visitors on Saturdays and 469 on Sundays.
- Weekdays during term-time are quieter – with an average of 301 visitors on Wednesdays, 265 on Thursdays, and 250 on Fridays.

The museum will be working hard over the next few years to both grow and diversify its audiences from a very solid base with great word of mouth recommendations, through Audience Development and Marketing & Communications strategies.

Museum Activities

TPM offers targeted programmes of exhibitions, events, activities and resources for schools, families, people with additional needs, and adult learners.

Families – the family programme reaches around 5,000 people per year, via onsite workshops, storytelling sessions and gallery trails usually offered free of charge as part of the standard ticket price.

Adult events – guided walking tours of Mail Rail tunnels are delivered and have proven particularly popular, with tickets regularly selling out within a few hours of release. There is an opportunity to upsell add-ons, such as a glass of champagne, to this audience.

Events hire – the museum makes its unique spaces available for event hire, filming and photography. From small birthday parties in Sorted! to large-scale events like Children in Need in Mail Rail and filming with Netflix, the museum caters across the MICE market.

Retail - the museum has two shops located in Mail Rail and The Postal Museum. Products are also sold online for home delivery. Also, there are opportunities to cross-promote with the café.

The Estate

The estate is in London, consists of Mail Rail and TPM, split across two sites separated by a road, Phoenix Place. Additionally, Mail Rail is located within Islington Borough Council and The Postal Museum building in Camden Borough Council.

Mail Rail:

- The Postal Museum operates a small section of the much larger network of tunnels and tracks that form the original Post Office underground railway, known as Mail Rail.
- The subterranean space includes a welcome space, shop, play space and kitchen at ground level. An events space, gallery and visitor embarkation space for the ride at basement level, and the former railway platforms about 60 feet under Mount Pleasant Mail Centre, linked via a tunnel that descends to the railway with about 1km of track.
- The site is recognised of significance to transport and industrial heritage but does not have formal listing status.

The Postal Museum:

- The Postal Museum is a refurbishment of Calthorpe House, forming over 50% of the development which opened in 2017. Contains the museum's offices, café, shop, exhibitions, archive and repository over three floors