

Warwick District Council
Oakley Wood

Specification for the Sale of Standing Timber



1 Introduction

Warwick District Council invites you to bid for the standing sale of predominantly softwood timber (approximately 95%) with a small element of hardwood (5%) which will result from thinning various stands of mixed conifer and limited mixed broadleaves (80% Scots pine, 20% mix of Douglas fir, Norway spruce and mixed broadleaves) planted between 1947-1981 in Oakley Wood.

2 Location of Oakley Wood

Oakley Wood is located within the county of Warwickshire, approximately three miles south of the town of Royal Leamington Spa as identified on the attached location plan in Appendix 1.

Oakley Wood is a plantation on ancient woodland site with some sensitive ground flora. It is owned by a local authority and enjoys a moderate level of public access and an active 'Friends' group.

3 Biosecurity

In order to keep the spread of pest and disease to an absolute minimum, all footwear, tools, vehicles, lorries and machines are to be free of loose soil and debris on arrival at site.

The successful bidder is to notify the Vendor of the site from which all machinery and tools have come immediately prior to arriving at Oakley Wood. If machinery has come from a controlled site, or a site with high risk of *Phytophthora ramorum*, Red Band Needle Blight, Acute Oak Decline or any other known pest or diseases, then disinfection of all footwear, tools, equipment and vehicles should be undertaken prior to coming onto site at Oakley Wood with agreed disinfectant.

Site and biosecurity checks will be undertaken prior to the commencement of work, and the successful bidder will be notified of the presence of any suspected pest or disease prior to starting work.

4 Site Information

4.1 Thinning operations

Areas to be thinned are clearly marked on the attached plan reference M09-0588 in Appendix 2. Further details of stand structure and crop are given in Appendix 3.

Thinning is intended to remove a maximum of 30% of the total standing volume on a feller-select basis¹, which is to be guided from a sample mark. Both systematic line thinning to allow access and selective thinning will be

¹ The exception to this will be line thinning which will be marked up and agreed with the buyer beforehand, but will average approximately one row in six where needed.

required. The objective of the thin is to promote the development of dominant conifer stems and broadleaves where evident within the stand. Communications between the harvester operator and the Vendor will be key to ensuring the right thinning intensity is achieved and regular communications will be held throughout the felling operation. The felling operator may be instructed to undertake thinning on a heavier or lighter basis following on from such communications and must adhere to such instructions when given.

Stumps must be cut to as low to the ground as practicable to ensure the maximum amount of the tree is removed.

4.2 Stump treatment

Stumps are **not** to be treated with urea.

4.3 Timber conversion

All timber is to be converted into the highest value product type so that income is maximised to the Vendor. The aim of the operation is to ensure as much of the timber in the stem is utilised and does not become part of the waste residue.

The Vendor is keen to support the local woodfuel market in order to promote this market. Bidders are asked to state on the bid form whether or not they are able to sell into such a market, although the highest price for a product will take precedence over any preferred market.

Please contact Chris Hastie, Green Infrastructure Manager, Warwick District Council (tel 01926 456219) should you need any local woodfuel contacts.

The expected products resulting from the felled timber is to be proportioned and detailed on the attached bid form. Please feel free to add any additional specifications and prices not listed in the bid form should you require this.

4.4 Lop and Top

All brash that results from the thinning operations must be cut into maximum 1m lengths and laid low (below 0.5m in height). Lop and top should not be stacked within 5m of any watercourse, drain, ride, footpath, earthbank or ditch.

4.5 Extraction

All processed marketable timber is to be extracted along the marked routes which look to avoid the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) (see Section 6.1) and rides heavily used by the public (see Section 6.2). Extraction must be undertaken with extreme care. Damage to other trees as a result of extraction must be avoided. Any trees found to be damaged as a result of operator negligence will be charged to the successful bidder at three times the current market value for every stem damaged.

4.6 Stacking Areas

The Vendor is proposing to create hardstanding access at the location identified on the attached plan reference M09-0588 in Appendix 2. The intention is to create a hardstanding access strip 3.2m in width extending approximately 50m into the wood proper, with a 26m 'T' for turning. Timber will then be stacked on the unsurfaced adjacent ground.

Construction of the access area is due to commence in May 2011 and will be completed prior to the commencement of thinning work.

Timber stacks should be left in a neat and safe manner and should not exceed 2m in height. The successful bidder will be instructed to ensure that timber stack warning signs are in place at all times.

An overhead cable crosses the access. See section 6.5 for details.

4.7 General operating policies

All areas must be worked methodically so that trees are felled back into the stand being worked so as to avoid damaging neighbouring trees. No trees or branch wood should be left hung up at any time.

All operations should avoid damage to the understorey as far as is practicable. Understorey damaged as a result of falling trees and extraction must be cleanly severed at ground level and laid low (0.5m).

Operations should be organised to minimise the extent of disturbance to the ground and damage to ground flora.

Natural regeneration where observed is also to be preserved as far as practicable during the felling and extraction operations.

5 Terrain

Mechanised operations over the entire site are unconstrained by the terrain, with the exception of the earthbanks around the SAM. Typically the terrain as described using the Forestry Commission Terrain Classification system is assigned as:

Ground conditions	Class 2 (good)
Ground roughness	Class 2 (slightly even)
Slopes	Class 1 (level)

6 Site Constraints

6.1 Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)

An area of approximately 3.6ha within the centre of the wood is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (monument number WA12, official name 'Oakley Wood Camp'). This area is thought to be an Iron Age fort or settlement and is roughly pentangular in form as identified on the attached plan reference M09-0588 in Appendix 2.

Earthbanks and a ditch extend along the majority of the woodland's boundaries and although not part of the SAM are considered to be of archaeological importance.

Access into the centre of the SAM is only to be undertaken at the identified crossing points on the attached plan. Access at any other point and travel on any earthbank within the wood is forbidden.

The area within the SAM should only be worked during dry ground conditions with access agreed with the Vendor prior to entry.

No ground disturbance or stump removal is to be undertaken within the SAM.

6.2 Public access

One statutory public Right of Way as identified on the attached plan reference M09-0588 in Appendix 2 crosses Oakley Wood from east to west. Additionally, the whole wood is open to permissive access and is heavily used by local residents. It is not proposed to shut the wood to public access during operations. A plan to zone work will be agreed with the successful bidder. It will be the responsibility of the successful bidder to ensure that the felling and extraction operator adheres to the agreed plan, provides and maintains all suitable signage and constructs and maintains exclusion barriers throughout the duration of works.

The successful bidder must ensure that the felling and extraction contractors have the required experience to work in woodlands with high public access. References will be sought prior to the instruction of work.

6.3 Restricted working adjacent to Oakley Wood Crematorium

Oakley Wood Crematorium is located on the western boundary of Oakley Wood as identified on the attached plan reference M09-0588 in Appendix 2. During times of service at the crematorium all operations within 200m of the chapels will be forbidden, affecting compartments 1a, 1b, 2a and 3a. It is anticipated that services will be restricted to 11.00am to 3.15pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am to 4.15pm on Fridays during harvesting operations. However, these times may be extended or reduced at short notice. It is therefore essential that the Forest Foreman maintains regular contact with the Vendor's Bereavement Services Manager.

A site meeting will be required with the Bereavement Services Manager and Forest Foreman prior to the commencement of works in order to finalise arrangements and confirm working methodologies.

Bidders and contractors should note that it is usually easier to restrict service times at the crematorium earlier during identified harvesting period of August – October rather than later.

6.4 Restricted working adjacent to residential property

No work is to be undertaken within 50m of neighbouring residential property outside of the period 0800-1800 hours Monday to Saturday and 0900-1600 hours on Sunday. This will include access to the timber loading bay by timber

lorries. The residential properties concerned are located approximately 25m to the north and 75m to the south of the loading bay.

6.5 Overhead cables

An insulated electricity line crosses the access point near the woodland boundary. The Vendor will look to conduct a meeting with Central Networks in order to establish whether or not goal posts are needed for access. If they are, it will be the responsibility of the successful bidder to construct and maintain such goal posts.

6.6 European Protected Species (EPS) & Regulations

The successful bidder is to comply with all relevant UK and EU legislation relating to EPS and their habitats during harvesting and extraction operations. If any evidence is found that might suggest an EPS is present, operations must cease within the area in question and guidance must be sought from the Vendor's Authorised Officer before continuing with the work.

7 Health and Safety

7.1 General requirements

The successful bidder will accept full responsibility for complying with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) together with all the relevant regulations in respect of the work comprised in the final agreement. All work is to be undertaken and completed in compliance with good industry best practice adhering to all relevant current HSE guidance, including AFAG guides.

All lorries entering the woodland must comply with the 'Timber hauliers' code of best practise.

A site information & hazards sheet will be provided with the standing timber sales agreement following the awarding of this work, both will detail the Vendor's knowledge of on site hazards and emergency contact details.

The successful bidder is to use this information along with their own on site observations to produce a site-specific risk assessment, method statement & emergency procedure document appropriate to this work. All documents must be forwarded to the Vendor prior to the work commencing for approval.

7.2 Contractor competency

Contractors engaged in the thinning operation must hold appropriate Certificates of Competence for all machinery and operations to be used. Copies of relevant certificates must be provided to the Vendor prior to commencement of works.

7.3 Public liability insurance

The contractor engaged on thinning operation must hold Public Liability insurance to a minimum of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance certificates must be provided to the Vendor prior to any work commencing.

7.4 Highways signage

In order to inform users of the highway of vehicle activity in and around the entrance point to Oakley Wood, advance temporary warning signs are to be placed 100, 200 and 300m from the access point in each direction along Banbury Road. Signs are to be of a size and structure compliant with the regulations set out in Chapter 8 'Traffic Safety Measures & Signs for Road Works & Temporary Situations' of the Traffic Signs Manual (DETR) under the New Roads & Streetworks Act (NRSWA) 2001.

8 Measurement and Payment

Timber from the thinning operation will be sold standing.

Measures are to be taken on an out turn basis per tonne for each separate product. All loads taken must be weighed over a registered public weighbridge.

The successful bidder will be responsible for ensuring each collection is registered by calling the Vendor's Authorised Officer to confirm the anticipated quantities to be taken away and declaring the transportation being used e.g. trailers, flat-bed.

The Authorised Officer will issue a collection reference number which is to be noted and matched to the weighbridge tickets obtained for the load.

Warwick District Council may undertake spot checks at any time to ensure that collections have been registered and the Purchaser is in receipt of a collection reference number. Any non-compliance with the system will be treated as a serious breach of this agreement and may result in its immediate termination without compensation. Further legal action may also follow to recover the value of any timber taken as part of previous unauthorised collections.

Weighbridge tickets must be presented to the Vendor as soon as they become available. Only registered weighbridge tickets will be accepted. Invoices will be issued by the Vendor at the end of each month.

Payment must be made monthly in arrears following receipt of the invoice sent from the Vendor. Payment must be made within 30 days of the date of the Vendor's invoice.

Compartment information and stand estimates are provided in Appendix 3.

9 Timing

Due to the site constraints, work is to be undertaken during August, September or October only.

Bidders are to indicate in their bid response the availability of their contractors for August to October 2011, and estimate the time it will take to complete the entire job based on the information presented in this document.

10 General Meetings

A site meeting between the Vendor and the successful bidder, including the felling and extraction contractors, will be required prior to the commencement of work in order to confirm all of the logistical requirements of the job. The successful bidder must also be available to meet on site during the operation at the request of the Vendor in order to address any issues that may arise.

11 Open Afternoon

An active 'Friends' group currently helps with the management of Oakley Wood and has a great interest in the way it is going to be managed in the future, including the proposed thinning operation. In order to inform and address any questions that members of the 'Friends' group may have, the successful bidder must make allowance for a three-hour "Open Afternoon" to include some controlled machinery demonstrations.

As part of the bidding process, bidders need to indicate whether or not they would be willing to hold such a meeting over a weekend or only on a weekday.

12 Site Inspection

Should you wish to undertake a site inspection, please park in the crematorium car park.

13 Provision of Documents

Because of the sensitivity of the site bidders are expected to indicate which contractors they propose to use to carry out the thinning. Bidders should ensure that the following information is provided.

- Two references relating to the bidder;
- Copies of all relevant operator certificates (e.g. chainsaw certification, machinery operators certification) for the proposed contractor;
- Copies of proposed contractor's insurance certificates containing a minimum Public Liability cover of £5 million;
- Copy of the proposed contractor's Health & Safety policy;
- Copy of the proposed contractor's Risk Assessment, Method Statement
- Details of experience of the proposed contractors of working on public access sites that combine ecological, archaeological and social/political sensitivities, along with at least two references relating to similar work

14 Bid Weighting

The Vendor reserves the right not to accept the highest or any of the bids submitted. Bids will be assessed using the following weighting:

Estimated income to the Vendor	60%
References and evidence of similar experience	30%
Placing product into the local woodfuel market	10%

Failure to provide evidence of adequate public liability insurance, health & safety policy, risk assessments and certificates of competence as outlined in Section 13 will mean that your bid will not be accepted.

15 Bid Deadline

All bids are to be entered onto the accompanying form and returned **no later than 4pm Tuesday 31 May 2011**. All bids must be based on the operations specified.

Bids may be submitted by post to:

Chris Hastie
Green Infrastructure Manager
Warwick District Council
Riverside House
Milverton Hill
Leamington Spa
CV32 5HZ

Or by email to chris.hastie@warwickdc.gov.uk

16 The Agreement

A contract will be awarded subject to the completion of a written agreement between the Vendor and the successful bidder.

The Vendor is 'Warwick District Council'.

17 Further information

Should you wish to discuss this sale further please contact:

Chris Hastie
Green Infrastructure Manager
Warwick District Council

Tel: 01926 456 219
Email: chris.hastie@warwickdc.gov.uk