

The Mersey Gateway Bridge Project's procurement programme has kicked off today (Monday 24 October) with the publication of the Contract Notice in the OJEU that invites potential bidders to register their interest in the scheme.

The publication follows the unanimous decision by Halton Councillors at a full council meeting last Wednesday (19 October) to accept the funding conditions proposed by the Department for Transport earlier this month.

The Council will use the northwest Local Authorities' procurement portal, 'The Chest', to administer the prequalification process. Potential bidders can now register through the portal to confirm their interest in tendering for the project and receive a copy of the prequalification document, which also includes a copy of the prequalification questionnaire.

Due to the complexity of the project, and the potential for bidders to propose different technical, financial and legal solutions, the Council will use the procurement regulations' competitive dialogue procedure to procure the project. The procurement process is expected to take two years, with a final contract being awarded towards the end of 2013.

Cllr Rob Polhill, Leader of Halton Borough Council, said: "I am delighted that every Councillor has voted to accept the funding conditions proposed by Government. That shows the cross-party commitment and consensus there is locally and in the region behind this project."

Steve Nicholson, Mersey Gateway Bridge Project Director, said: "We are very pleased that we have been able to respond quickly to Government's funding offer and begin the procurement programme within three weeks of the Secretary of State's announcement. We are aware there is a great deal of interest in this tendering opportunity and we are looking forward to receiving expressions of interest from world class organisations."