



Blackpool Council



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport



Scope of Works: Mount making goods and services

Contract Dates: June 2023 to December 2023

Closing date for submission of quotation: Midday 3 May 2023

Interview date: Thursday 11 May 2023

Blackpool Council is seeking an individual or company to provide mount making services in preparation for the opening of Blackpool's new museum, Showtown – the museum of fun and entertainment, opening March 2024. These services include the production and fitting of 300 mounts for a variety of artefacts.

Background to Showtown

Blackpool Council is creating Blackpool's first ever museum, Showtown - the museum of fun and entertainment. Showtown tells the extraordinary, rarely-shared stories of Britain's first mass seaside resort and its unrivalled role in the development of British popular entertainment over the past 150 years.

An immersive and engaging experience aimed at family audiences, Showtown's 1,200sqm of themed galleries designed by Casson Mann will feature exciting activities and audio-visuals and displays featuring around 800 items from our Blackpool Heritage Collection and from our partners and supporters including the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Music Hall Society and private collections.

The six themed galleries are:

Beside the Seaside

Visitors are invited to step inside Showtown and into a stage set of Blackpool's seafront. Watch a stunning 15 metre seaside beach panorama come to life celebrating Blackpool as the first mass seaside resort and its iconic beach. See how holidays have changed, or have they? Perform your own Punch and Judy show and meet the characters who have entertained holidaymakers over the last 100 years and gave birth to Showtown.

How's Tricks

Visitors go behind the scenes in a Blackpool magic shop and have fun exploring practical jokes and magic tricks. Meet some of the amazing magicians who learned the tricks of their trade in Blackpool and discover Blackpool's importance to magic. See the incredible gallery of magicians who have performed in Showtown.

Roll Up! Roll Up!

Our visitors step backstage into the world of circus and listen to stories from incredible circus performers. Find out why Blackpool is an international centre for circus. See stunning circus costumes and amazing props. Then step into our circus ring and become part of the show.

It's Showtime

Visitors explore a model townscape celebrating Blackpool's theatres and go through the stage door to find out more about the producers and stars of Blackpool's shows and popular entertainment. Have a go at ventriloquism or playing along with George Formby. Are you the next comedy star?

It's Better with the Lights On

Our visitors enter our Lightworks workshop and step into the shoes of the designers and creators of the famous Blackpool Illuminations. Create your own illumination design and discover the history and magic of the UK's oldest and greatest free light show.

Everybody Dance Now

Step onto the dance floor and get dancing. Discover Blackpool's iconic role in dance from the spiritual home of ballroom to the home of Northern Soul. See the glittering ballroom outfits and marvel at the skill of their creators and the talent of professional dancers.

Showtown is currently in development and will be located in the transformed Palatine Building on the Golden Mile, next door but one to Blackpool Tower. This building is set to house a hotel, along with a number of commercial/leisure units. Showtown will have a dedicated street-level entrance and shop on Bank Hey Street. The museum's permanent and temporary exhibition spaces will occupy a large portion of the first floor.

Visit www.showtownblackpool.co.uk for more information.

The Commission

Overview

The whole concept of the exhibition is a behind the scenes view of what makes Blackpool famous – what it takes (and has taken) to put on the summer season. It's the people, the professions, the skills, the history and importantly, the audience – that huge, critical mass of working class British holiday maker.

The space is designed to be like a journey around Blackpool. Visitors arrive at 'the Prom' – a linear gallery from where they then move into the galleries to explore 'the town'. Through its exploration of Blackpool, Showtown is a celebration of both the British seaside holiday and British popular entertainment that has international resonance.

Showtown is working with a number of key exhibition fit out contractors, AV and interactive contractors: Beck Interiors, Squint/Opera, Sysco Productions and AVAIF Ltd. Beck Interiors – the exhibition fit out contractors started on site on 20 March 2023 with a view to complete

networks and AV installation by end August 2023. All objects will be installed between September and October 2023.

Details of the Commission

The curators for each of the six themed displays have researched and selected objects for display in the museum.

The idea of a behind the scenes view is key to the concept so, for example, you are not looking at a Punch and Judy Show but instead you are inside the Punch and Judy booth, listening to the Professors who make the magic happen, using interactive puppets, hearing the crowds outside.

Similarly, in the Circus area, the visitor does not enter through the ticket office - they 'sneak round the back', lifting up the tent flap to find themselves behind the ring where the clowns are putting on their makeup, the smell of greasepaint, the jugglers are practising, the animals being fed.

Because of this, the display of many of the objects will not be standard. Juggling batons will be mounted as if suspended in time, mid-juggle. Some costume items will appear as though they are 'ready to be put on', hanging in a wardrobe. Magic shop shelves will be stocked full with novelty items. This will all add to the illusion for the visitor that they are part of the back-stage area of Blackpool's venues, rather than in a traditional museum display. A preliminary assessment of the mounting requirements has been considered. We are seeking expertise for final and fitting solution for each object.

The successful candidate or practice will be provided with plans, object lists, mounting schedules and designs to advise on the best approach to mounting of displays to achieve the vision and safeguard the objects within the agreed designs.

The Showtown team envisages there will be an intense period of work, on site in the new museum in the run up to, and during object install. Some mounts could be made in advance off site if the successful candidate has capacity for this. A dedicated workspace will be available on site for object unpacking, mount making, photography and preparation for install during this intense period of work.

This is a competitive process in which there is a budget of up to £35,000. Applications will be considered on account of experience, expertise, track record, value for money, etc

Key objectives

- To assess Showtown's mount schedule and advise accordingly.
- Advise on the design of any specialist mounts needed for the safe display of objects, including objects identified for future rotation.
- Work with the textile conservator to ensure safe and appropriate costume mounting of smaller textile and costume accessories which meet the designer's vision and requirements of objects.
- To create a range of mounts that safely support the artefacts whilst reflecting Showtown's character.

- Work with the curatorial team to install the objects into display cases and on open display ahead of the museum opening.
- Be available to offer any support required for National Museum lenders' couriers who will be installing their own objects, if required.
- Provide any training to staff for the safe care and handling of any objects that have specialist requirements.

Requirements of the commission

- To build and create bespoke mounts for objects requiring them
- Use 'off the shelf' mounts where appropriate to keep costs down
- A small number of objects may require a prototype mount to be created and sign off for approval before fabrication
- Update and maintain Showtown's mount schedule and any agreed changes to approach
- Advise and support Showtown on possible risks relating proposed mounting
- Regularly update Showtown team on progress, issues and opportunities
- To complete the mounting of all objects on schedule and to budget
- Produce a specialist report with guidance and recommendations on the care, storage and display of any objects with specialist requirements

Required Knowledge, Skills and Experience

We are looking to appoint an individual or company with considerable experience of working within the cultural sector and demonstrable evidence of the following:

- A proven track record of delivering interesting and dynamic mounting displays
- A proven track record of working with National Museums to ensure their objects are displayed to their satisfaction
- Knowledge and experience of mounting objects in a unique way.
- Knowledge and experience of working with a wide range of assets and materials. Knowledge and experience of working with artefacts relating to entertainment, comedy, variety, dance and music would be of significant benefit.
- Working in a collaborative manner
- Excellent self monitoring and motivational skills
- Excellent planning and communication skills.

Fee available

This is a competitive process in which there is a budget of up to £35,000 for all fees (inclusive of materials, expenses, contingencies, and prelims).

The expectation is that this work will dovetail with the programme needs - to be mutually agreed.

Means of appointment

We are inviting quotation for this contract. Selection may be through an online or in-person interview, on 11 May 2023.

For this we will be requesting that candidates give a short presentation of 10 minutes on one specific project and bring a number of examples of their work.

Key Documents

Appendix 1 NDA Blank (Enclosed)

The following documents will be supplied on return of a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement sent to janet.palmer@blackpool.gov.uk

Appendix 2 Showtown Mount Schedule

Appendix 3 Casson Mann Exhibition Design Drawings

Appendix 4 Exhibition Fit Out Programme

How to apply

Your submission must include:

- No more than two sides of A4 providing an outline proposal of your approach to delivering the brief, including the skills you would use to deliver the project. Please also include evidence of demonstrable professional experience of working in the sector
- A proposed budget for the work and how you envisage you will manage your time (resource optimisation)
- Submit a portfolio of up to three similar / relevant projects as case studies
- Two referees with whom you have worked on similar projects. Please ensure they are in a position to provide a reference/testimonial for the team members you propose (if applicable) for this project.
- CVs may be attached in addition to your proposal.

Your price must be inclusive of ALL disbursements and exclusive of VAT.

Please send your proposal to:

Jill Carruthers, Exhibitions Manager, Showtown (Blackpool Museum Project),
jill.carruthers@blackpool.gov.uk by **Midday 3 May 2023**. For further information on the exhibition content or any enquiries regarding the role, please contact Jill Carruthers on the email above. For further information on the project please visit www.showtownblackpool.co.uk

Selection process

Submissions/proposals will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Response to brief 40%
- Previous experience 40%

- Cost 20%

Assessment of the extent to which the response demonstrates and evidences:

- Response to the brief
- Robust delivery proposal
- Previous experience and successful delivery
- Sector specific knowledge and experience
- Adequate resources / capacity to deliver the brief
- Clear and robust contingency plans to ensure continuity of service and sufficient cover
- Appropriate plans to manage and coordinate activity
- Quality commitment throughout proposal
- Appropriate consideration given to working and communicating effectively
- Cost of commission

Data Privacy

Blackpool Council is the Data Controller for the personal information you have provided in this quotation. The Council's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at DPA@blackpool.gov.uk.

For further information about how Blackpool Council uses your personal information, including your rights as a Data Subject, please see our website <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Transparency-and-open-data/Data-protection/Privacy-notices/Privacy-notices.aspx>.

Additional Information

The Council cannot guarantee the amount of business which will be generated to the successful bidder - any stated volumes, quantities or usages are a guide only.

Please also note that the Council will not be liable for any costs / prices not identified in your submission. No responsibility will be borne by the Authority for errors in Bidders' pricing submission.

The Authority does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any offer, and reserves the right to accept the whole or part of any offer. Each party shall be responsible for its own costs in submitting this offer.