



Tender Wording for Data Access and API Requirements

Thank you to the following for their contributions to the wording below:

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About This Document

The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) helps boroughs bring the best of digital, data and innovation to improve public services for Londoners. You can read about our work at: <https://loti.london>.

Recognising the pivotal role that data plays in delivering 21st Century services, we're working to tackle barriers that hinder boroughs from using and sharing their data.

One such barrier is where suppliers of technology systems charge - sometimes significant - fees for extracting system data that is not part of standard reports or dashboards. Boroughs expect to work with suppliers who understand and support their need for data access.

Enabling data sharing specifically via Application Programming interfaces (APIs - which allow two applications to talk to each other) is a key enabler of boroughs' ability to create seamless digital services for their residents. Boroughs expect this functionality in the majority of systems they operate. However, APIs aren't always the optimal way to do things (e.g. where data volumes are vast) and we don't wish to penalise suppliers who are trying to do the right thing but offer data access in a different way.

This document offers suggested wording to be included in tender documentation so that boroughs can set clear and explicit expectations with suppliers about their data access and API requirements.

Note to Procurement / Service Managers: We strongly recommend discussing the suggested clauses below with your IT Team to ensure that the data requirements outlined in your tender meet your business requirements.

Tender wording

The Supplier must provide a full description of how they meet the Data Extraction and Application Programming Interfaces requirements outlined below.

Data Extraction *(for use in all tenders)*

Tender Clause Wording	Explanation / Caveat
1. Wherever permitted according to the General Data Protection Regulation, all other relevant data protection legislation, and where the Council has control and rightful permission to use the data:	The caveats in this statement are needed because some systems license external data to augment services. For example, weather data might be used to help predict or explain patterns, but that raw weather data can't be supplied as it's not owned by the supplier or the council.
1.1. The Council will have the right to recover, share, reuse and publish: all data that is entered into the system; any data that is augmented through the use of the system (e.g. linked data); and any data generated through the operation of the system.	Include in all tenders.
1.2. The system must enable full copies of all system data to be extracted at any time. This should be in a structured, standardised (preferably open) and machine-readable format.	Include in all tenders.
1.3. The Supplier will surrender, delete or return the system data to the Council at any time, at the request of the Council.	Include in all tenders.
2. <i>Either:</i> These features must be provided without additional charge	If you require a guarantee of free access to system data, use the first clause. However, note the risk that some suppliers may simply include the cost in the overall contract charge.

or limitation that would prevent the Council from accessing, sharing and using system data over which it has control and rightful permission. Or Any and all charges that would be incurred in respect of the above functionality must be explicitly stated in the tender response.	The first clause may still be preferred if councils are specifically hindered from using data if they have to get sign off for <i>additional</i> charges when wishing to access data.
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Application Programming Interfaces *(for use in most tenders, at the discretion of the Council)*

Tender Clause Wording	Explanation / Caveat
3. Wherever permitted according to the General Data Protection Regulation, all other relevant data protection legislation, and where the Council has control and rightful permission to use the data:	The caveats in this statement are needed because some systems license external data to augment services. For example, weather data might help predict or explain patterns, but that raw weather data can't be supplied as it's not owned by the supplier or the council.
3.1. The system must have web APIs that enable the Council to give other applications full ability to send data to, or request data from it. This should cover all significant business functions.	You may wish to replace " <i>This should cover all significant business functions</i> " with a more granular list, e.g. " <i>This should cover, at minimum, the following business functions...</i> "
3.2. APIs should enable live data to be queried in real-time.	Delete / include as appropriate.
3.3. Where datasets are linked to timestamps, APIs should support "Time Based Extracts" (e.g. data changed after date "X") for both full system extracts as well as for more specific web API calls.	Delete / include as appropriate. You may wish to explicitly state specific datasets that are recorded against a timestamp for inclusion in this clause.
3.4. Any data directly relevant to the business function of the	For complex applications with lots of areas of

application that can be submitted by a user operating the system should also be able to be entered via API.	functionality, this clause may need to be modified / made more specific in order to be practical.
3.5. A complete register of all the system's APIs that are available to the Council must be provided. All Open APIs must be discoverable.	We recommend always including this clause, as many councils have complained that APIs promised to them during sales meetings are not present when the system is deployed. Note that not all APIs maintained by a software supplier are APIs of relevance to local authorities. This is because one must distinguish between APIs that suppliers host for their own systems to speak with each other internally, and APIs which speak with external systems, such as those developed by an innovative startup. Increasingly, many software suppliers use a 'microservice architecture', where instead of building their product as one monolithic software they have built many modular components that speak with each other using APIs. Therefore, a blanket tender requirement to access every API your supplier's system features, including internal ones, will demand more than you need and may actually risk the integrity of the internal system.
3.6. All APIs must come with comprehensive documentation.	Include in all tenders.
3.7. Where API access is restricted, a test API must be available. Ideally, test environment(s) should be provided that let developers test the API without affecting production environments.	Discuss this clause with your IT team to determine if there are specific areas where a test API and/or test environment are vital. This clause may be too onerous as a blanket statement for complex applications and for some smaller suppliers.
4. <i>Either:</i> These features must be provided without additional charge or limitation that would prevent the Council from accessing, sharing and using the data through the API.	If you require a guarantee of free access to system data via API, use the first clause. However, note the risk that some suppliers may simply include the cost in the overall contract charge. The first clause may still be preferred if councils are

<i>Or</i> Any and all charges that would be incurred in respect of the above functionality must be explicitly stated in the tender response.	specifically hindered from using data if they have to get sign off for <i>additional</i> charges when wishing to access data.
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For more information about LOTI's work to improve data sharing in London, see:

<https://loti.london/projects/informationgovernance/>