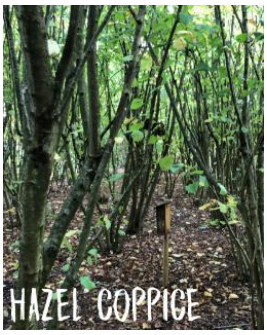
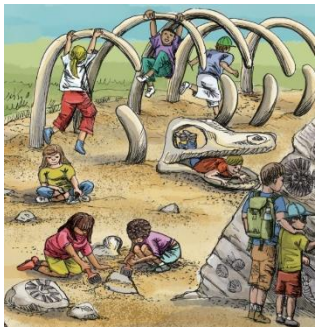
Wonderseekers

Brief for Commissioned Work

Project: Exploring Chalk Landscape

Location: Winchester Science Centre, Winchester, UK





Client	Wonderseekers
Name of Project	Exploring Chalk Landscape
Tender Submission Deadline	**1 December 2025**
Total Project Budget	Suggested budget guideline **£475k to £560k** (excluding VAT)
Location	Winchester Science Centre, Telegraph Way, Winchester, Hampshire.
Project Completion Date	Subject to planning, this schedule of work is to be completed by **17 July 2026.**
Main Contact	Jo Hennessy, Project Director
Email	JoHennessy@wonderseekers.charity

Wonderseekers

1. Our Charity

Wonderseekers is a children's charity that uses science engagement to empower children to improve lives and protect and heal our planet. Its purpose is to raise children's aspirations and confidence when it comes to big topics such as climate change, as well as promoting diversity and inclusion, so that all children have the ambition and freedom to improve their own lives, the lives of others and ultimately life on Earth.

Set up in 1986, and renamed as Wonderseekers in 2022, the Charity has always focused on delivering hands-on science experiences for young children. Through fun, immersive and accessible experiences in schools, communities, online and at its science and discovery centre in Winchester, the Charity is able to spark curiosity when it comes to science. As part of it's For People and Planet Strategy, launched in 2023, it will continue to use these interactive science experiences to positively engage children, through all disciplines of science, with the natural world to enable them to take action against climate change.

This project represents a pivotal step in delivering Wonderseekers' long term vision for growth and impact. As the first major milestone of its *Strategy 2030*, it signals a step change in how the Charity engages children with nature, climate change and biodiversity loss at Winchester Science Centre.

The new outdoor exhibits will broaden Wonderseekers' science offer, creating opportunities for children to explore real world science through play, discovery and interaction with the natural environment. They will also play a vital role in driving visitation during the summer months, when the site has clear capacity for growth compared with the higher occupancy levels seen in term time and school visit periods. This development responds to changing visitor expectations and the need to strengthen year round appeal, helping to secure the Charity's long term sustainability while deepening its impact on children's confidence, curiosity and care for the planet.

2. Design Brief

2.1 Summary

Wonderseekers are looking to commission a creative team to develop and deliver a new play experience for 3-12 year olds inspired by the unique chalk landscape of the South Downs, where our flagship visitor attraction is situated. The new experiences will be utilising two separate outdoor spaces within the existing footprint of Winchester Science Centre. This new development is part of Wonderseekers wider masterplan and strategy 'People and Planet Connected'.

2.2 Key Design Elements

The experience should feel immersive, rooted in nature, and scientifically authentic while being joyful and safe for all. The key design elements for the scheme:

- **Accessible**: a space that can be enjoyed by everyone with multisensory features and play features which accommodate wheelchairs. Room for parents to safely store their pushchairs and buggies.

- **Imagination:** We want to create an experience where children can explore scientific themes but still have space to use their imagination and learn through play
- **Openness:** Space for children to move around freely and feel like they are in a 'wild' space which celebrates the surrounding landscape of the South Downs.
- **In harmony with the landscape:** Create a space where a public experience can be managed alongside respecting our wild spaces.

3. The Scheme

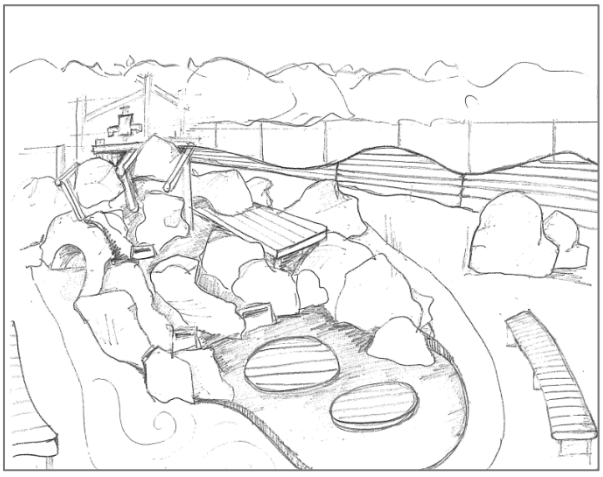
The Works will take place in two outdoor areas at Winchester Science Centre, the **Upper Garden** and the **Lower Lawn.**

3.1 Upper Garden

Chalk Stream Water Play (area approx. 140m²): Using the natural slope of the land to create a water play area inspired by a chalk stream, one of the most iconic feature of chalk downland. Through play, children learn about the unique properties of a chalk stream and how the layers of chalk rock provide nutrient-rich waters which support an astonishing array of species.

Key design features include:

- A way for children to manipulate the water, i.e. a pump, tools to create small dams.
- A nod to some of the chalk stream species, i.e. tunnels for children to become water voles.
- A range of engagement and challenges for children of different ages.
- Accessible interaction and engagement points.

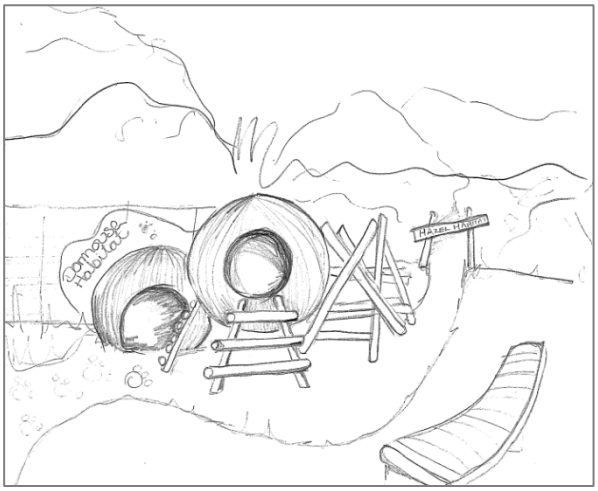


Early concept sketch.

Hazel Dormice Play Structure (area approx. 54m²): A small play structure that mimics the activity of hazel dormice through physical play such as climbing, jumping and hiding. This structure will be situated next to our hazel coppice which we know is inhabited by real-life dormice.

Key design features include:

- A nest and adjoining climbing apparatus
- An accessible nest that is floor level for wheelchair access.



Early concept sketch.

Other Upper Garden Requirements (included in this contract)

- Redesign of the fencing nearest to the building (A)
- Accessible footpaths to access all the play features (approx. 100m) (B)
- Seating – benches around the edge of the play areas

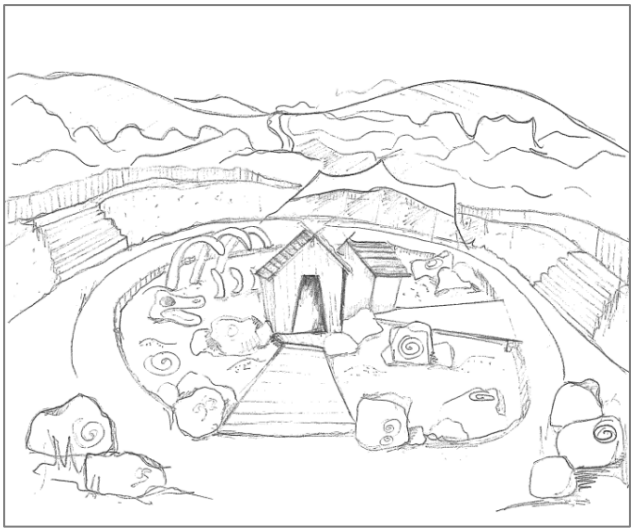
Note
There is currently an existing willow play house in the centre of the Upper Garden, in between the designated area for the Chalk Stream Water Play and the Dormouse Play Structure. We would like it to remain, but will agree to it being removed if necessary for the integrity of the scheme design.

3.2 Lower Lawn

Palaeontology Dig Play Area (145 m^2): Role play experience where children become palaeontologists and search for signs of prehistoric life in the sand. The small wooden huts are 'research stations' where the young palaeontologists can identify their fossil and find out which species they have discovered. There is also pulleys and buckets to send equipment or information to other members of the dino-team. There is scope for there to be a person-led palaeontology experience throughout the day during the public offer, where participating children are given a challenge to complete as a team.

Key design features include:

- Bones and fossils embedded in the sand for children to discover
- Giant bones of a dinosaur sticking up through the sand which children can play on
- Large chalk boulders with tactile fossils embedded in them scattered throughout for children to climb on
- Palaeontology huts or 'Research Stations' which contains key information about prehistoric species
- Accessible pathways for wheelchair users



Early concept sketch.

Note

A 7.5x10m stretch tent is currently installed at the far end of the Lower Lawn, which is used as an outdoor covered classroom and area for activities on public days. This needs to be factored into the but could be repositioned if needed.

Other Lower Lawn Requirements (included in this contract)

- Tiered seating built into the natural slopes of the bank on each side (approx. 5m wide). (C.a, C.b)
- Mid-level fencing around the perimeter of the Lower Lawn area (approx.94m)
- A solution to improve the aesthetics of the concrete outer walls of the building (approx. 96m2) (D)
- Access from door decking (15mx 3.5m). Must be accessible for wheelchairs (E)
- Accessible paths for wheelchair and buggies to access all areas within the space (approx. 60m)

3.3 Soft Landscaping

Soft landscaping is not included with the contract of this tender, however the appointed contractor will be expected to work in collaboration with our preferred landscaper to ensure that a cohesive vision is created throughout the play park areas

4. Visitor Experience

4.1 Audience and Visitors

The new experiences are for children aged 3-12, including those with SEN and disabilities.

4.2 Capacity

Below is a table indicating maximum capacity of how each newly developed area will be used. Facilities such as toilets and baby change can be accessed inside the Science Centre, no additional facilities are required as part of this design.

Visitors: Who will be using the Upper Garden	Max number of visitors at one time
Families with young children aged 3-6 who visit our centre at weekends or school holidays.	100 - 150
Groups of primary school and staff as part of our school package offer.	40
Events	100
Visitors: Who will be using the Lower Lawn	**Max number of visitors at one time**
Families with young children aged 3-6 who visit our centre at weekends or school holidays.	100 - 150
Groups of primary school and staff as part of our school package offer.	40
Events	100

4.3 Interpretation and Engagement Narrative

Below is an activity outline for how the play areas could be used by visiting children through self-led play, facilitated workshops, and special events. For full narrative see Appendix VII.

Chalk Stream Water Play

- Paddling in the chalk stream, touching models of chalk rock and gravel, watching water flow and even moving the stream to see how bends and pools form.
- Using magnifying glasses to examine miniature insects, or help the creatures find food and safe places to hide.
- Identify water plants in the river, making burrows for water voles or mimicking the movement of otters and kingfishers to see how animals use the water.
- Hands-on conservation activities, like moving obstacles to allow fish to swim freely, planting mini riverbank trees, practice kick sampling cleaning the water or following interactive stories of how ecologists help rivers recover.

Hazel Dormouse Habitat

- Moving, foraging, nesting, and exploring like a dormouse.
- Mimicking the dormouse by explore climbing structures
- Crawling through soft grassy tunnels and low shrubs, feeling what it's like to move carefully as a tiny nocturnal creature.

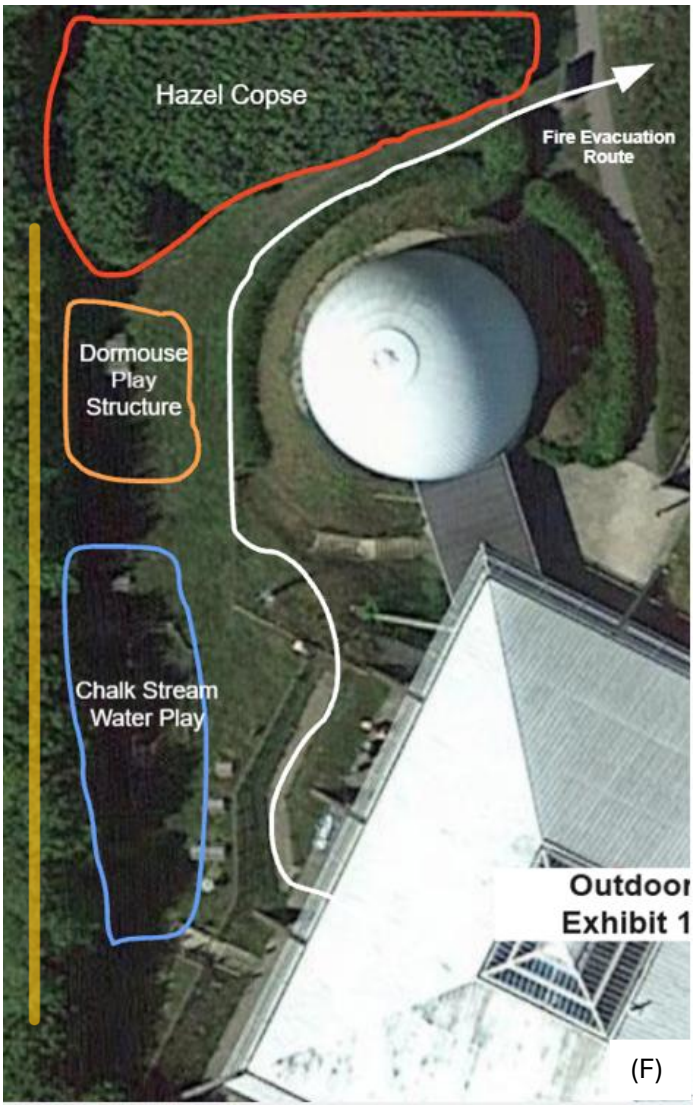
- Curl up in cozy nesting areas, feeling the warmth and security that the dormouse shares with its mother, father, and siblings.
- The structures mimic the nesting activity of a dormouse who build their hibernation (sleeping) nest on the ground in the winter, and their breeding (family) nests high in the trees during summer.
- Using interpretation and people led activities, children will learn how important it is to protect habitats for species like the dormouse, who's population has halved in the last 30 years.

Palaeontology Dig

- Young explorers become palaeontologists, uncovering fossils in the sand.
- Carefully examine and identify fossils in the palaeontology research station huts.
- Playing in sand, digging at different depths to uncover different species
- Bones of giant marine reptiles emerge from the sand for children to climb on.
- Buckets and pulleys carry fossils and equipment between the huts, allowing the team to work together just like real palaeontologists.
- Large chalk boulders for children to climb on and jump from.
- At each research station, fossils examined under magnifying glasses.
- Learning spaces allow children to touch fossil casts and study models, connecting the hands-on experience of digging with the scientific story of life in the Cretaceous seas.

5. Specifications

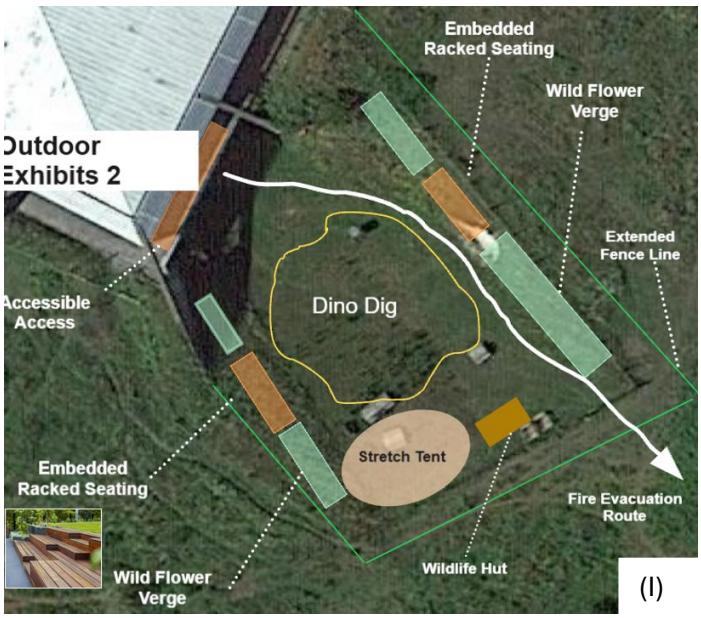
5.1. Upper Garden Specification



- Total area of garden(F) - approx. 1500m^2
- Hazel Coppice -approx. 482 m^2
- Chalk Stream Water Play Area (G) -approx. 140 m^2
- Dormouse Play Structure Area (H) - approx. 54 m^2

Note
There is a Public Right of Way which runs along the back edge of the Upper Garden up to Morn Hill (highlighted with the yellow line), with a perimeter fence separating the path from the Garden.

5.2 Lower Lawn Specification



(I)

(J)

- Total area of Lower Lawn(I) - approx. 870m^2
- Palaeontology Dig Play Area (J)-approx. 145m^2

Note

The white arrow on map (I) indicates a fire escape route which must be kept clear throughout the installation period and once the project is completed. The perimeter fencing must have a lockable access gate onto the surrounding land.

5.3 Ecology

The Contractor will work alongside our ecologist team to ensure that the project is adhering to Wonderseekers land management plan (to be completed by January 2026).

5.4 Site Access

Lower Lawn Access: Access to the Lower Lawn must be taken into consideration as part of the Construction Management Plan. Access to the Lower Lawn requires moving over an area of sensitive chalk grassland, or via the building.

Upper Lawn Access: Access to the Upper Garden is via a 2.83m gate next to the hazel copse. To access the gate, vehicles must drive up the main entrance footpath to the Science Centre so vehicle access is only available before or after the Centre is open to the public.

Please see Appendix IX for detailed map.

Note

A site visit is essential to assess access, gain detailed measurements and access points to and around the site. Please contact johennessy@wonderseekers.charity to arrange a suitable time to visit.

6. Scope of Work

6.1 Project Budget Overview

As a guide, the estimated cost for this contract will be a total of approximately **£475k to £560k** (excluding VAT). Please complete the Tender Costing Template (Appendix II) and submit with your application

Final payment will be upon satisfactory completion of the works and following receipt by Wonderseekers of a satisfactory RoSPA Post-Installation Report. This report should be commissioned, paid for and supplied to Wonderseekers by the Contractor. Payment to be agreed in stages based on work completed.

6.2 Project Timeline Overview

This project will open the two new outdoor exhibitions by 17th July 2026. Contractors must be confident that they can deliver the project to completion by this date. Below is a suggested timeline:

Task	Completion Date
Appointment commences	08/12/25
Concept RIBA 2	TBC
Developed Design RIBA 3	TBC
Planning application submitted	02/02/26
Technical Design RIBA 4	TBC
Planning granted	06/04/26
Enabling works - Water infrastructure (Chalk Stream)	TBC
Construction RIBA 5 (Off site)	TBC
Installation on site	TBC
Handover RIBA 6 (including RoSPA testing)	TBC
Soft opening RIBA 7	10/07/26
Open to public	17/07/26

See below for procurement timeline.

6.3 Contract Structure

The client requires the appointed contractor to work to the following structure:

RIBA	Work Delivered	Contract Type
Stage: 2 & 3 Design	Provide the relevant documentation required to submit a full planning application by 02/02/26 including: • Full set of drawings for the play structures • A design plan of the Lower Lawn and Upper Garden • Construction Management Plan	Pre-construction Service Agreement (PCSA)
Stage: 4 Technical	Planning Application Submitted	
	Whilst waiting for planning approval complete RIBA 4.	

Stage: 5-7 Construction	Planning Permission Approved	JCT
	Project continues to completion	

6.4 Contractor Responsibilities

The contractor must:

- Work closely with the client from RIBA Stage 2 to RIBA stage 7 to help them achieve their vision as outlined in this initial brief.
- Bring the client's vision to life by designing and constructing an accessible, safe play park aimed at children aged 3-12 years.
- Act as the Principal Contractor should any works require sub-contractors.
- Provide a detailed programme of works, including a timeline for key activities and milestones.
- Identify and eliminate or control, so far as reasonably practicable, foreseeable risks to the health and safety of any person: carrying out or liable to be affected by construction work.
- Ensure full compliance with all health and safety regulations defined in the CDM Regulations 2015, and the HSE publication Managing Health & Safety in Construction (L153) throughout the project duration
- Maintain clear communication with the client's project team throughout the project.
- Ensure all works are completed to the highest quality standards and are in line with the clients vision.
- Inform the Client of its Duties under the CDM Regulations and report to the Client anything the Principal Contractor is aware of in relation to the project which is likely to endanger their own health and safety or that of others.
- Attend meetings with the Client, and other consultants and contractor as necessary for the performance of the services.
- Work in collaboration with our preferred soft landscaper to ensure that a cohesive vision is created throughout the play park area.
- Create an annual maintenance plan for the area to hand to the Client at completion.
- Management of RoSPA Inspections
- Ongoing maintenance support for play structures and surfaces for a negotiated period of time after installation.
- Maintenance training, snagging and overseeing the soft opening and testing with audience

6.5 Policies

The contractor must adhere to the following policies:

- Health & Safety: Provide risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) for the works to be carried out.
- Recruitment: Demonstrate safer recruitment practices.
- Sexual Harassment: Demonstrate a robust policy for preventing workplace harassment.
- Sustainability: Commit to minimising environmental impact by adhering to sustainability best practices.

6.6 Sustainability

Contractors must submit an Environmental Statement and outline how they and their suppliers are minimising environmental impact including:

- Sourcing materials
- Manufacture
- Packaging
- Transport
- Disposal and product end of life options

6.7 Safety Standards

All works equipment and IAS shall be manufactured, tested, installed and conform to the relevant British Standards including:

- BS EN 1176 (a series of standards published between 2017 and 2023)
- Test methods for surfaces are included in BS 7188 and BS EN 1177
- The play equipment must comply with The Equality Act 2010

6.8 Installation

- During installation, the contractor must cause minimum disruption to our public programme. Restrictions to working areas, hoardings and management of access to be agreed at pre-meeting.
- Contractor must coordinate closely with the client to minimise disruption to adjacent spaces.
- All installation works must be completed by no later than 10th July 2026, ready for a soft opening.
- There is no room for storage in the building at WSC but space is available for a compound if required.
- The contractor is responsible for the disposal of scrap materials and should include this in the price. There is room for a skip on site.

6.9 Maintenance and Aftercare

- A full schedule of maintenance requirements is to be provided once the play area is completed. This should include a breakdown of items, specifications and maintenance requirements to assist with the future site management, inspections and maintenance.
- We expect the play park and the any relating infrastructure (paths, benches etc) to have a guarantee of at least 5 years. Please provide details of your own and manufacturer guarantees and warranties on equipment, safety surfacing and installation works with the Tender.
- The works will be subject to an independent Post-Installation Inspection (PII) before the project is signed off (as per the pricing and payment section). The Contractor shall undertake any remedial issues identified as part of the PII report, as part of the existing project cost. The play area must not be opened for public use until the PII has been signed off to the satisfaction of the Client.

Wonderseekers

7. Tender Instructions

7.1 Submission Requirements

Interested contractors must submit the following:

- Return of contractor questionnaire provided
- A response to the client brief which showcases the qualities outlined in the selection criteria
- Information as outlined in the 'Supporting Information' document provided
- Supporting documentation as listed in the 'Supporting Information' document provided
- Confirmation that you have public liability (£10m minimum) and employer liability insurance in place, and you can provide copy certificates and proof of payment of premium upon commencement of the contract.

7.2 Selection Criteria

All tender submissions will be assessed by the following criteria:

Tender Scoring	
Price overall – value for money within the project budget parameters	**30%**
Quality – materials, strength and stability, quality management, safety compliance.	**20%**
Visitor Experience - Play value, science education and accessibility	**20%**
Capability to deliver on project – previous experience, project approach	**20%**
Sustainability – environmental impact	**10%**

A desktop assessment will be carried out against the criteria outlined above. The score will then be awarded and the percentage weighting applied to give the weighted score.

Capability	Response	Remark	Marks
Contractor is able to meet needs of Client.	Exceeds expectations.	Absolute confidence.	10
Contractor is likely to meet needs of Client.	Comprehensively answers the brief.	Confidence	8
Small risk that contractor may not be able to met the needs of the Client.	Sufficiently answers the brief without omissions and generally convincing.	Minor concerns	6
Moderate risk that contractor will not be able to meet the needs of the Client.	Has minor omissions and in part unconvincing or irrelevant to project.	Moderate concerns	4
Significant risk that contractor will not be able to meet the needs of the Client.	Has major omissions and is largely unconvincing and irrelevant to project.	Major Concerns	2
Contractor will not be able to meet the needs of the Client.	Unable to respond to brief, or the response is misleading.	Not acceptable	0

7.3 Procurement Timeline

The programme for the procurement process is as follows:

Invitation to Tender	30/10/25
Deadline for submission of tender clarification questions	11/11/25
Deadline for tender submissions	01/12/25
Award of contract	03/12/25
Appointment commences	08/12/25

Tenders must be submitted by no later than **12pm on the 01/12/25** via email to JoHennessy@wonderseekers.charity and the email subject title to state "Exploring Chalk Landscape".

During the tender period, should the tenderer wish to present questions or seek clarification on any information contained within this pack, requests will only be considered up to **5pm on the 11/11/25.** Please submit any questions to JoHennessy@wonderseekers.charity.

8. Appendices

Appendix I	Contract Questionnaire
Appendix II	Tender Costing Template
Appendix II	Tender Application Supporting Document
Appendix IV	Charity Strategy
Appendix V	Topographical Survey - Full
Appendix VI	Topographical Survey - Detail
Appendix VII	Early Concept Drawings
Appendix VIII	Interpretation and Engagement Narrative
Appendix IX	Sustainability Strategy
Appendix X	Vehicle Access to site
Appendix XI	Accessibility at Wonderseekers