



Candidate Information Pack

Pre-Construction Manager



Why this role matters: COEL is continuing to strengthen the way it qualifies, prices and wins contract-led work. This role will support that ongoing development by improving tender quality, protecting margin and giving delivery teams a stronger start.

Contents

Executive Summary	2
About COEL	3
Company Culture, Vision and Values	3
Role Profile.....	5
Headline Information	5
Purpose of the Role	5
Key Relationships	5
How the role connects across the business	6
Potential Career Development Pathway	7
Key Areas of Responsibility	7
KPIs.....	9
What This Role Is Not.....	9
What Success Looks Like (First 12–18 Months)	9
Person Specification	10
Experience & Capability.....	10
Skills & Attributes.....	11
Systems.....	11
Why Join COEL?	11
Application and Recruitment process	12

Why now: COEL is continuing to invest in a disciplined Winning Work model as part of a joined-up One COEL approach to winning work and delivering projects well. The business wants to focus on the right opportunities, maintain strong tender quality, protect margin and improve the handover from pre-construction into delivery. The Pre-Construction Manager will be central to that development, helping connect Business Development, Design, Commercial, Procurement and Delivery around clear tender decisions and strong project readiness.

Executive Summary

COEL is continuing to invest in a disciplined Winning Work model, and this pack is for a senior pre-construction professional who wants to make a visible contribution to that next stage. The role will help COEL choose the right opportunities, maintain tender quality, protect margin and set delivery teams up for success.

At its core, this is a high-impact role for someone who can combine hands-on estimating strength with broader pre-construction leadership. The successful candidate will bring commercial judgement, technical credibility and calm challenge before COEL commits to price, programme or contract terms.

The role's centre of gravity is Contract-lane pre-construction: tender strategy, estimating, cost planning, technical coordination, value engineering, risk review, supply chain engagement, bid quality, programme readiness and handover into delivery.

The right person will be experienced, organised and confident: able to lead cross-functional input, communicate credibly with clients and consultants, maintain judgement under tender pressure and raise the standard of how COEL converts opportunities into successful projects.

Role: Pre-Construction Manager | **Reports to:** Associate Director Pre-Construction (Contracts) | **Location:** Cambridge | **Focus:** estimating, tender strategy, bid quality, risk management and project readiness | **Outcomes:** stronger tender submissions, improved estimating accuracy, clearer risk visibility, better margin protection and smoother handover into delivery.

About COEL

Why join COEL? *You will join a business with strong client relationships, a recognised regional brand and a clear appetite to continue developing its pre-construction standards.*

This is a chance to help shape how COEL qualifies opportunities, prices risk, improves tender discipline and builds a more scalable winning work function.

COEL is a Cambridge-based commercial design and build, fit-out and workplace delivery business. We create inspiring, high-performing spaces for clients across the region, combining practical delivery capability with strong client relationships and a reputation for professionalism.

We run COEL with the discipline of a mature business, while actively improving governance, systems and ways of working to support sustainable growth. That means we care about the basics: clear accountability, simple processes that people actually follow, and data you can trust.

Our **One COEL** approach is about making sure the business works as one joined-up team rather than as separate functions. Design, Pre-Construction, Business Development, Commercial, Delivery, Furniture and support teams all need to contribute at the right time so that client opportunities are properly understood, priced, shaped, won and delivered. For this role, One COEL means creating stronger links between early opportunity qualification, tender strategy, estimating, risk review, value engineering, client communication and handover into delivery.

Company Culture, Vision and Values

COEL is building a high-trust, high-performance culture where people take ownership, keep their word and work together to solve problems. We value governance that protects the business, but we avoid bureaucracy for its own sake. Process should be lightweight, usable and consistently followed.

- ✓ Accountability: own the outcome, not the excuse
- ✓ Evidence over opinion: escalate with facts, context and clear options
- ✓ Simple disciplines, consistently followed: qualification, estimating, risk review, procurement, reporting and handover
- ✓ Continuous improvement: reduce rework and raise the standard

Leaders and managers at COEL are expected to demonstrate judgement, integrity and pragmatism. In this role, that means bringing commercial and technical grip to the earliest stages of a project: understanding the client brief, testing feasibility, coordinating input, challenging assumptions, developing robust costs and ensuring the business makes informed decisions before committing to delivery.

VALUES & BEHAVIOURS

ACT RESPONSIBLY.
Professional • Accountable • Honest • Committed

STRIVE FOR BETTER.
Adaptable • Innovative • Resilient • Efficient

WORK TOGETHER.
Collaborative • Transparent • Supportive • Considerate

BE A GOOD PERSON.
Appreciative • Inclusive • Respectful • Optimistic

INSPIRE CHANGE.
Empathetic • Ethical • Conscious • Visionary

This role is likely to suit you if you enjoy bringing order to complex tenders, working with incomplete information, improving estimating discipline and influencing how a business wins better-quality work. It will be best suited to someone who wants a broad pre-construction role with regular cross-functional collaboration, rather than a narrow estimating or bid administration position.

Role Profile

Headline Information

Package and working pattern: Competitive salary dependent on experience; Cambridge-based role with some hybrid working; opportunity to influence COEL's pre-construction standards; close collaboration with senior leadership; clear progression potential subject to performance, business need and demonstrated impact.

Job title	Pre-Construction Manager
Role type	Full-time, permanent
Reporting to	Associate Director Pre-Construction (Contracts) Lane: Contract
Department	Pre-Construction (Contract lane)
Location	Cambridge, with some hybrid (one day per week)
Salary	Dependent on experience

Purpose of the Role

To lead and improve COEL's Contract-lane pre-construction and estimating capability, ensuring contract-led opportunities are properly qualified, accurately priced, commercially assessed, technically coordinated and handed into delivery with clear scope, risk, programme and cost assumptions.

The Pre-Construction Manager will help COEL win appropriate, profitable contract-led work by producing robust tenders, coordinating internal and external input, managing estimating activity and supporting tender decisions with clear evidence, commercial judgement and practical delivery insight. The role must work alongside the D&B lane, but its primary accountability is the Contract lane.

Key Relationships

Relationship	How they work together
Associate Director Pre-Construction (Contracts)	Day-to-day leadership, lane priorities, tender governance, estimating standards, workload planning and quality control for Contract-lane opportunities.
Senior Leadership Team	Opportunity priorities, bid strategy, commercial risk, tender review and business decision-making.
Business Development	Opportunity qualification, client intelligence, pipeline quality, positioning and early engagement.

Relationship	How they work together
Design Team	Technical review, design clarification, compliance checks, buildability and value engineering where required for Contract-lane tenders.
Estimating	Cost plans, take-offs, subcontractor pricing, tender submissions, benchmarking and estimating accuracy.
Commercial Manager / Commercial Director	Margin protection, commercial risk, contract assumptions, procurement strategy and handover alignment.
Construction Director / Delivery Team	Programme, buildability, logistics, resource assumptions, delivery risk and project handover.
Procurement and Supply Chain	Subcontractor engagement, supplier pricing, market testing, package strategy and preferred supplier feedback.
Wider support functions	Finance, Marketing, Bid Support, Compliance, Governance and Business Operations support forecasting, bid quality, document control, approval gates and process discipline.
External stakeholders	Clients, consultants and subcontractors provide tender clarification, scope development, cost advice, programme assumptions & professional communication.

How the role connects across the business

COEL qualifies work properly, prices risk clearly and hands projects into delivery with confidence.

1. Qualify — Business Development, Senior Leadership Team and Associate Director Pre-Construction test client fit, project type, commercial potential, capacity, margin and risk.



2. Price — Estimating, Supply Chain and Commercial build a robust cost position through cost planning, subcontractor returns, allowances, exclusions, clarifications and pricing evidence.



3. Shape — Design, D&B lane, Delivery Team and technical specialists test buildability, coordination, value engineering, programme, logistics and delivery assumptions.



4. Approve — Associate Director Pre-Construction, Senior Leadership Team and Commercial review margin, risk, contract assumptions, governance and bid/no-bid discipline before COEL commits.



5. Handover — Delivery Team, Procurement, Commercial and the Project Team receive clear scope, pricing build-up, clarifications, risk register, programme assumptions and procurement strategy.

The role is not simply to gather input. It is to create momentum, test assumptions and make sure COEL enters each project with clarity, discipline and commercial confidence.

Potential Career Development Pathway

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Pre-Construction Manager	Senior Pre-Construction Manager	Head of Pre-Construction / Pre-Construction Director Potential
Leads pre-construction and estimating activity on agreed opportunities, ensuring tenders are accurate, complete, competitive and commercially controlled.	Takes ownership of larger or more complex opportunities, improves tender strategy, mentors others and strengthens cross-functional pre-construction discipline.	Leads COEL's pre-construction function, bid strategy, estimating standards, tender governance, opportunity qualification and continuous improvement across the winning work process, subject to business need, performance, leadership maturity and demonstrated impact.
Develops dependable cost planning, tender review, risk identification, supply chain engagement and project handover habits.	Leads more complex negotiations, improves bid quality, strengthens estimating benchmarks and influences client strategy.	Sets functional standards, improves tender conversion, protects margin and ensures COEL has a scalable, disciplined pre-construction operating model.
Progression trigger: reliable tender leadership, estimating accuracy, strong coordination and trusted judgement.	Progression trigger: sustained impact on win quality, margin protection, bid discipline and team capability.	Progression is not automatic: it depends on business need, performance, leadership maturity and demonstrated ability to improve business outcomes.

Key Areas of Responsibility

Tender strategy and opportunity qualification

- ✓ Assess Contract-lane opportunities against client fit, project type, programme, margin potential, contract risk, information quality and COEL's delivery capacity.
- ✓ Make clear bid / no-bid recommendations using evidence, commercial judgement, pricing risk and practical delivery insight.
- ✓ Develop tender strategies that balance competitiveness, quality, risk and margin protection.
- ✓ Coordinate tender launch, responsibilities, action plans, submission timelines and early risk escalation.

Estimating and cost planning

- ✓ Lead or contribute directly to cost plans, take-offs, subcontractor pricing, tender analysis and final tender build-up.
- ✓ Review drawings, specifications, employer's requirements, schedules, site information and consultant documents to identify scope, gaps and pricing assumptions.
- ✓ Obtain, compare and challenge subcontractor and supplier returns for scope compliance, value, risk and commercial clarity.
- ✓ Produce commercially defensible tender submissions with clear allowances, exclusions, clarifications, assumptions and pricing evidence.

Bid management and submission quality

- ✓ Coordinate clear, complete, compliant and persuasive tender submissions.
- ✓ Bring together Marketing, Business Development, Design, Commercial and Delivery input into a joined-up bid response.
- ✓ Ensure submissions explain COEL's approach, programme, logistics, value, quality, risk controls and delivery methodology in plain, client-friendly language.
- ✓ Improve the consistency of bid documents, tender templates, pricing summaries, risk registers and handover packs.

Design, technical and buildability coordination

- ✓ Review client, consultant and employer information for feasibility, buildability, scope completeness and technical alignment.
- ✓ Identify design gaps, coordination issues, compliance matters and delivery constraints that could affect price, programme or contract obligations.
- ✓ Coordinate D&B, design and technical input where clarification, value engineering or specialist review is required.
- ✓ Ensure MEP, architectural, structural, logistics and programme implications are considered before submission.

Risk, programme and commercial review

- ✓ Maintain clear tender risk and opportunity registers.
- ✓ Ensure key risks are priced, qualified, mitigated or escalated before submission.
- ✓ Work with Delivery and Commercial colleagues to test programme assumptions, logistics constraints, procurement lead times and delivery methodology.
- ✓ Support tender review and approval gates with clear information on price, margin, risk, exclusions, assumptions and contract issues.

Supply chain engagement and procurement strategy

- ✓ Engage subcontractors and suppliers early enough to secure quality pricing, market insight and technical input.
- ✓ Develop package strategies that support tender competitiveness and future delivery.
- ✓ Assess subcontractor returns for scope gaps, abnormal risk, exclusions, qualifications and value.

- ✓ Use Procurement, Commercial and post-project feedback to improve pricing reliability, package scoping and supply chain selection.

KPIs

- ✓ **Tender quality:** submissions are complete, compliant, clear, persuasive and aligned to client and consultant requirements.
- ✓ **Estimating accuracy:** tender costs, allowances and assumptions are robust, evidenced and reviewed against delivery outcomes.
- ✓ **Margin protection:** tenders are commercially sound, with clear risk allowances, exclusions, clarifications and margin assumptions.
- ✓ **Risk visibility:** major scope, programme, pricing, information and contractual risks are identified, recorded, priced, qualified or escalated before submission.
- ✓ **Handover quality:** delivery teams receive clear, usable tender information with fewer gaps, surprises or unresolved assumptions.
- ✓ **Lane discipline:** Contract-lane tender review gates, bid programmes, estimating records, risk registers and handover packs are consistently used and aligned with the wider Pre-Construction team.

What This Role Is Not

- ✓ It is not a D&B role; it must collaborate closely with that lane, but its primary accountability is Contract-lane pre-construction.
- ✓ It is not estimating-only; estimating is essential, but the role also requires leadership, coordination, client awareness and commercial judgement.
- ✓ It is not bid administration; the Pre-Construction Manager must challenge assumptions, drive action and improve tender quality.
- ✓ It is not win-at-any-cost; COEL needs profitable, deliverable and strategically appropriate work, supported by useful discipline rather than bureaucracy for its own sake.

What Success Looks Like (First 12–18 Months)

- ✓ **Process discipline:** COEL has a clear Contract-lane pre-construction process from opportunity qualification through to tender submission, approval and handover.
- ✓ **Tender quality:** contract-led submissions are consistent, well structured and easy for clients and consultants to understand.
- ✓ **Estimating reliability:** outputs have clearer assumptions, risk allowances, exclusions, clarifications and pricing evidence.
- ✓ **Handover quality:** delivery teams receive clear information that supports a smooth transition from tender award into project delivery.
- ✓ **Risk visibility:** scope, programme, pricing, information and contract risks are surfaced earlier and reviewed clearly before commitment.
- ✓ **Supply chain reliability:** subcontractor engagement is more organised, with better quality returns and stronger market feedback.



Person Specification

Experience & Capability

- ✓ Proven experience in pre-construction, estimating, tender management or a closely related role within construction, fit-out, refurbishment, interiors or a relevant main contractor environment, with strong exposure to contract-led tendering.
- ✓ Strong estimating experience, including reviewing tender documents, consultant information, drawings, specifications, employer's requirements, developing cost plans, assessing subcontractor returns and preparing tender submissions.
- ✓ Good understanding of commercial fit-out, refurbishment or workplace delivery, including design coordination, MEP interfaces, logistics, programme, contractual risk and supply chain dependencies.
- ✓ Ability to lead or coordinate multi-disciplinary tender input across design, estimating, commercial, procurement, delivery, marketing and client-facing teams while maintaining clear Contract-lane accountability.
- ✓ Strong commercial awareness, with the ability to understand how scope, information quality, risk, programme, procurement and contract assumptions affect margin and delivery.
- ✓ Experience of value engineering, risk registers, tender clarifications, exclusions, qualifications and tender handover processes.
- ✓ Comfortable engaging with clients, consultants, subcontractors and internal senior stakeholders.

Skills & Attributes

- ✓ Organised and methodical: able to manage multiple deadlines, tender inputs and decision points without losing detail.
- ✓ Commercially confident: able to challenge assumptions, test costs and escalate risk constructively.
- ✓ Clear communicator: able to explain complex cost, scope and risk issues in plain English.
- ✓ Collaborative leader: able to coordinate input from people who do not directly report to them.
- ✓ Calm under pressure: able to maintain quality and judgement during tender deadlines.
- ✓ Improvement mindset: willing to strengthen templates, routines, benchmarks and processes.
- ✓ Candidate-friendly professionalism: credible with clients and consultants, while practical and grounded with internal delivery teams.

Systems

- ✓ Strong Microsoft 365 and Excel capability, including estimating workbooks, cost plans, tender trackers, risk registers and structured reporting.
- ✓ Confidence using construction, project management, estimating, take-off or document-control systems where relevant to tender management.
- ✓ Disciplined use of clean data, reliable pricing evidence, controlled tender records and usable handover information.

Why Join COEL?

You will join a lean, agile and values-led organisation that aims to perform at a high level while staying collaborative, human and practical. Through the One COEL approach, design, pre-construction, delivery, furniture and support teams work together to create better outcomes for clients and better learning opportunities for colleagues.

- Pension and holiday allowance.
- Healthcare cash plan and wellbeing support.
- Bonus arrangements, subject to company and individual performance.
- Training budget and support for relevant professional memberships.
- Laptop and phone for work use.
- Parking and cycle-to-work support.
- Company socials and opportunities to build strong internal relationships.

Application and Recruitment process

We will run a clear, respectful process and give candidates enough context to show their judgement, experience and fit for the role.

1. Initial conversation — experience, motivation and overall fit → **2. First-stage interview** — experience, estimating judgement and cultural fit → **3. Technical/commercial scenario** — tender-based discussion → **4. Final leadership conversation** — mutual fit, expectations and next steps

COEL is committed to fair and inclusive recruitment. We welcome applications from candidates who meet the essential requirements and can show the potential, attitude and commercial judgement needed to develop in the role.

If this sounds like the type of role where you can add value, we would welcome a conversation. We are looking for someone who can bring judgement, structure and commercial discipline, and who wants to help shape a stronger pre-construction function at COEL.