

UNRESTRICTED

TO: THE EXECUTIVE
27 JANUARY 2015

CALL-OFF CONTRACTS - SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the award of 9 call-off contracts for supported bus services, as specified below.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive approves the award of the supported bus contracts set out in Table 1 within Appendix 1 (CONFIDENTIAL).

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 In accordance with the Department for Transport guidance and public sector procurement legislation, all supported bus services must be subject to a compliant tendering process. New contracts must now be awarded in order to maintain compliance and ensure continued service provision.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 An alternative would be not to award the supported bus contracts; however, this would remove a key part of the overall transport system.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out the Council's role regarding bus service transport within the Borough. This includes procuring socially necessary services that are not provided by externally funded free market services. The Council's supported bus services, which are delivered under the 1985 Transport Act, allow the Council to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services that they consider appropriate to meet any public transport requirements, which in their view would not be met apart from through the provision of such supported bus services.
- 5.2 Bus services funded by the Council are termed 'supported services' and are provided through contracts with bus operators. Typically these can be described as local bus services that provide communities with access to their daily needs.
- 5.3 As part of the current procurement exercise a review of the supported bus network was undertaken. This exercise found no obvious gaps in commercially provided bus services that required intervention through a revised supported network. Accessibility checks show that the proximity of residential areas to a supported service gives good coverage. Therefore, review work has focussed on how the supported network could be enhanced and provided more efficiently whilst giving due regard to the objectives set in the Council's Bus Strategy (adopted January 2014).

- 5.4 As a result, the key features of the revised supported bus network are set out below:
- i. Maintained accessibility to/from Bracknell town centre and other key destinations, such as Wexham Park Hospital, supermarkets and the surrounding local amenities;
 - ii. A consistent level of service and frequency across the Borough;
 - iii. Combined existing routes where appropriate, to improve reliability and reduce the overall number of buses required;
 - iv. Updated timetables and increased opportunities for people to make connections between local bus services;
 - v. Retained existing connections with rail services and improvements to these where possible;
 - vi. Improved access to health facilities, such as Brant's Bridge 'HealthSpace'; and
 - vii. Provision of services for new housing developments.
- 5.5 The revised supported bus network, effective from August 2015, is shown on the plans attached at **Appendix 2**. The revised network was shared with all Members in July 2014 and The Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered, and endorsed, the revised supported network on 23 September 2014.
- 5.6 The 9 call-off contracts have been tendered in accordance with the Council's Passenger Transport Services Framework Agreement (which was approved by the Executive in November 2013). The Framework Agreement has established three suppliers for supported bus services i.e. the operators Courtney Coaches, First and London United.
- 5.7 The three suppliers on the Framework Agreement were given the opportunity to submit quotations against the proposed supported bus network; two of which submitted quotations. The following options for price submission were available to the suppliers:
- i. A base price against x 9 proposed routes;
 - ii. A combined price against one or more of the listed proposed routes;
 - iii. An innovative bid; enabling suppliers to link the proposed supported bus network with a commercial service(s) of their own choice, if viable; and
 - iv. Additional options such as extended services (i.e. Sunday services, evening services etc).
- 5.8 At this stage, it is intended to award the contracts on the base price option only as these contracts will provide a stable supported bus network until any future changes are introduced in conjunction with the regeneration of Bracknell town centre. The contracts will be awarded for a term of three years, with two possible extensions of one year each
- 5.9 In accordance with the Framework Agreement, the tenders received have been assessed on price alone, as all three operators had already passed the Council's quality assessment criteria.
- 5.10 To allow bus operators sufficient time to register the bus services with the Traffic Commissioner, and provide sufficient time for an effective public awareness exercise on

the changes, it is intended to award these contracts in February 2015. The new contracts must commence operation on 01 August 2015.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The proposed contracts comply with the terms of the Public Contracts Regulations and the Transport Act 1985; the Council's contract Standing Orders have been complied with.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The costs of the tendered contracts and the proposed 2015/16 revenue budget are included at Table 1 within Appendix 1. The tendered prices for the proposed contracts represent an increase on the current contracts of £93,570 per annum. These revised prices can be funded in 2015/16 and 2016/17 utilising Section 106 monies the Council have already received for the provision of bus services. It is anticipated that further Section 106 monies to support bus services will be received in respect of the developments at Warfield, Binfield and the Town Centre to fund the costs in 2017/18, if these monies are not received there would be a shortfall in funding of around £144,000 in 2017/18. This would therefore require the Council to fund the shortfall or retender the services to ensure that the costs matched the budget available.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The Council's Bus Strategy (approved in January 2014) included a full Equalities Impact Assessment. These new supported bus contracts enhance the current service provision.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The current structure of the bus network would not be maintained if this report was not approved.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The Framework Agreement for the Provision of Road Based Passenger Transport Services;

The Bus Strategy;

Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3); and

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report – Supported Bus Service Contracts.

8 CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

- 8.1 Sue Cuthbert – Principal Engineer (Transport Implementation)
Telephone: 01344- 351168
E-mail: Sue.Cuthbert@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Neil Mathews – Transport Development Manager
Telephone: 01344- 351163
E-mail: Neil.Mathews@bracknell-forest.gov.uk