

**TO: THE EXECUTIVE
12 APRIL 2016**

**HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND OCCASIONAL TRANSPORT SERVICES
Director of Corporate Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To award contracts for the provision of transport expenditure in two areas -
- Statutory home to school transport which consists of Special Educational Needs (SEN), mainstream, learning and literacy and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) transport and is managed by the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU).
 - Occasional transport (taxi, coach and minibus) which can be booked by all departments across the Council.
- 1.2 The statutory home to school transport is contracted out to primarily local suppliers and has been managed through the ITU since October 2006.
- 1.3 Dependant on the requirement, occasional transport is usually booked through the ITU. However, staff throughout the Council can also book travel for vulnerable client groups such as children under the care of social services, families or individuals in need of urgent relocation or other vulnerable adult residents receiving care and support from the Council. If there is no other reasonable alternative, transport may be booked for internal staff in very exceptional circumstances. These contracts will allow transport users to be covered by the same framework agreement.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That, subject to finalisation of contract conditions, the Council awards the home to school transport to three suppliers, contractors A, B and C detailed in the confidential annex.

	Proposed Supplier
Bundle 1	Tenderer A
Bundle 2	Tenderer B
Bundle 3	Tenderer A
Bundle 4	Tenderer B
Bundle 5	Tenderer B
Bundle 6	Tenderer B
Bundle 7	Tenderer B
Bundle 8	Tenderer B
Bundle 9	Tenderer B
Bundle 10	Tenderer A
Bundle 11	Tenderer C
Bundle 12	Tenderer A
Bundle 13	Tenderer C
Bundle 14	Tenderer B
Bundle 15	Tenderer A

- 2.2 That additionally the Council award the above same three contractors the contracts for occasional transport services.
- 2.3 That contracts be awarded in April 2016 with the contract commencement at the start of the new academic year, 1 September 2016 for a period of four years to 31 August 2020.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To establish transport services contracts which deliver best value for money and consistent levels of quality across the Council and to comply with procurement legislation. This links to the new Council Plan which is underpinned by six strategic themes including value for money.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Consideration was given to undertaking a collaborative procurement with one or more of the neighbouring Berkshire authorities. However this could have the effect of restricting tenderers to regional or national companies. This would impact on local employment as the majority of taxi routes either start within the Borough, or do not cross the Borough boundary. Therefore the most sustainable bidder will be based within the Borough.
- 4.2 Collaborative procurement is also unlikely to deliver overall value for money as the procurement process and contract management will be more complex. There is also the issue of contractors charging more as taxi companies from far outside Borough would have to make the journey into the Bracknell Forest (dead mileage) in order to start work.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 In 2011/12 the Council tendered for the provision of Home to School & Occasional Transport Services which resulted in the award of home to school framework agreements to three operators, with a further four operators approved for ad-hoc transport services.
- 5.2 Over 400 pupils are covered by the above contracts, including 17 wheelchair users and 35 pupils in the autistic spectrum. There are 111 routes which are in 15 "bundles" based on end location. The largest numbers of transported pupils, attend Kennel Lane School, with 27 routes terminating there every school day.
- 5.3 The ITU has carried out annual parental satisfaction surveys since autumn 2008. These have shown that there is a consistently high level of satisfaction with the overall service and that of the drivers and escorts. 2015 survey results show 97% satisfaction with overall service, 94% with the driver and 95% with the escort.
- 5.4 Adverts for the pre qualification exercise were issued on the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), Contracts Finder and the South East Business Portal in September 2015.
- 5.5 The pre qualification exercise was completed in December 2015 and several contractors were invited to tender. The tender evaluation was completed in February 2016.

5.6 The timescales for the project are:

Advertised on South East Business Portal, Contracts Finder and Tenders Electronic Daily (OJEU)	11 September 2015
Issued Invitation to Tender to Shortlisted Contractors	11 December 2015
Received Response from Tenderers	15 January 2016
Decision by Executive	12 April 2016
Framework Agreement Awards Letters Sent	2 May 2016
Framework Agreement Start Date	01 September 2016
Call-Off Contracts Start Date	01 September 2016

6 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The Borough Solicitor has advised throughout the procurement process, and has nothing to add to this report

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The financial implications are set out in the confidential annex.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 This has been completed for this requirement and was attached to the Procurement Plan.

7. **STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

7.1 Consideration was given to the likelihood of change to some individual transport arrangements for small number of vulnerable pupils. Whilst it is regrettable that some long term transport arrangements are going to change, every effort will be made by the ITU to make the process as smooth as possible. As such there is an implementation project plan which covers the period from contract award in April 2016 to contract start in September 2016. This plan covers areas such as communication with parents and pupils, applying for and receiving enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS), picture and story book production and circulation, meetings between drivers and escorts and parents and pupils.

7.2 Contract Management is undertaken by the ITU and comprises of termly meetings with all contractors and the ITU work closely with the SEN team. The ITU also work with Council's licencing team and Thames Valley Police to conduct vehicle checks at the school gate to ensure on-going passenger safety.

- 7.3 Financial checks have been performed by the Chief Technical Accountant in Corporate Services on all preferred suppliers for these services and are considered satisfactory for the purposes of the contracts. It is recognised that there is a small risk in awarding eight bundles of work to one contractor but satisfactory capacity checks have been undertaken by the core project team.
- 7.4 Additionally, the long lead in time before contract start in September 2016 helps to reduce the Council's exposure to risk when making changes to individual routes.

8 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 8.1 Parents / Carers
Extended Project Team
The Head of Procurement, Assistant Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer were consulted during the course of this procurement.

Method of Consultation

- 8.2 The Head of Procurement, Assistant Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer were consulted during the development of the Procurement Plan. Additionally the draft tender documents were circulated for comment and review by members of the extended project team.
- 8.3 Parents and carers were given an opportunity to attend an event on the 29 September 2015 at Bracknell Forest Leisure Centre to raise any concerns with the procurement process. A mailshot was issued to all parents and carers of children benefiting from the current service but uptake was very disappointing with only one parent taking up the opportunity.
- 8.4 All eligible parents / carers were advised that a consultation would be active over the period 8 September to the 23 October 2015. This consultation only produced four responses however 100% satisfaction was recorded.

Background Papers

Confidential Annex
EIA available on request

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