

TO: EXECUTIVE
18 JULY 2016

**AWARD OF FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR
SUPPORTED BUS PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES
(Director – Environment, Culture and Communities)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the award of a new Framework Agreement for Supported Bus Passenger Transport Services to a number of bus operators.
- 1.1 The Council has a duty under the 1985 Transport Act "to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements ... which would not in its view be met apart from any action taken by it for that purpose."
- 1.2 The new framework agreement will provide the structure to procure supported bus services, and the call off contracts under the framework will then procure those services.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive:

Award the Framework Agreement for Supported Bus Passenger Transport Services to the transport operators identified in the Confidential Annex 1.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The tenderers have met the minimum thresholds set for quality which allow them to be invited to tender for routes without further qualification.
- 3.2 The officers have worked to the approved procurement plan.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not to award a new Framework Agreement and instead to extend the current Framework. This was discounted as the new Framework includes an additional local bus operator who is likely to bid for services and this additional competition should help keep costs for services as low as possible.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Council currently provides 9 subsidised public bus services. These services were procured following a mini-competition among suppliers on the existing Framework agreement for Road Based Passenger Transport. Courtney Buses were awarded the contract on 27 March 2015 to operate these services from 1 August 2015 until 31 July 2018, with the option to extend twice, by one year each until 31 July 2020.

Unrestricted

- 5.2 As the redevelopment of Bracknell town centre continues, with new shops and restaurants, there will inevitably be demand for additional bus services in the evenings and at weekends. If these services are not provided by operators on a commercial basis, the Council will need to consider the appropriateness of subsidised services and officers have already begun work on developing possible routes and timetables, focussing on access to the new town centre.
- 5.3 Since the current Framework agreement was introduced in December 2013 the bus operator scene in Bracknell Forest has changed. In August 2015 First Group withdrew all but one of their services from the borough and since that time Reading Buses have begun operating two routes in the borough. It is therefore considered sensible for the Council to refresh the existing framework in order to take account of the changing passenger transport environment.
- 5.4 The new framework agreement is very similar to the existing framework. It will be in place for a maximum of 4 years (3 +1). However individual call-off contracts may be let for up to 3, 5 or 8 years depending on demand and affordability.
- 5.5 The potential expenditure against the framework is between £2m and £7m over the period of the agreement. This extensive range covers the potential for services to be reduced if necessary and allows for up to eight years for call-off contracts.
- 5.6 In evaluation, tenderers had to meet minimum overall quality thresholds, as well as thresholds on individual criteria, to ensure that they are considered suitable to deliver bus services in Bracknell Forest. While some evaluation of costing was included, this was on sample routes only and cost evaluation will be a focus of the call-off competitions. Quality received 80% of the weighted scoring and cost 20%.
- 5.7 All tenderers exceeded the quality thresholds set, as detailed in Confidential Annex 1.
- 5.8 Call-off competitions under the framework agreement will be evaluated on a sliding scale, dependant on the route, with a minimum of 50% weighting for total cost. Where a new operator is sought for an existing route, the total cost will have a 100% weighting. Where the operators are required to develop new solutions the evaluation will include an appropriate level for quality. Qualitative criteria for a mini-competition might include emissions, frequency of journeys, serving deprived areas and facilities served, and link into the finalised Bus Strategy.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 No significant legal issues arise from the matters discussed in this report

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from the award of this framework agreement. Call off competitions will be held as existing contracts expire or new ones are required. Tenders will be evaluated using the criteria outlined in paragraph 5.8.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An EIA screening report was included as part of the Procurement Plan for this Framework award and it was agreed that a full EIA was not required.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The potential risks and associated mitigations are set out in the Procurement Plan.

Other Officers

- 6.5 Procurement advice was received from Geoff Reynolds.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 No consultation of the Framework Agreement was carried out

Background Papers

Confidential Annex 1 – Tenderers evaluation results

Contact for further information

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