

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

Children's Services Committee: 13 December 2006

Subject: School Transport Tendering Procedures Session 2007/2008

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** This report informs Members of the proposed timetable for the processing of tenders for mainstream school contracts and for transport for pupils with additional support needs.
- 1.2** This report seeks approval from Members to proceed with the proposed timetable in order to secure contracts for school transport for session 2007/2008, and up to session 2011/2012 where contracts are for 3 or 5 years' duration.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Director of Education and Cultural Services submitted a full report on school transport issues to a meeting of the Education Committee of 24 April 1996 (volume page 417 refers).
- 2.2** The 1996 report detailed the requirements of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 for Education Authorities to make appropriate provision to assist pupils to have access to education. The Act requires that free transport be provided for all pupils up to the age of 8 who live more than 2 miles from their local school and to pupils over the age of 8 who live more than 3 miles from their local school.
- 2.3** The policy presently operated by West Dunbartonshire Council provides free transport for primary school children who live more than 1 mile from their local school and for secondary school children who live more than 2 miles from their local school.
- 2.4** The Education authority is also required to make provision for pupils with additional support needs to attend a school to meet the requirements of these additional needs.
- 2.5** In order to secure contracts for session 2007/2008 and beyond, it is now necessary to begin the process as timetabled below.

3. Tendering Procedure

3.1 Additional Support Needs Contracts

- 3.1.1 a) December 2006** – present information on contracts to be renewed to Children's Services Committee and seek approval to put tendering process into operation.
- b) January 2007** – prepare information regarding contracts to be renewed.
- c) February/March 2007** – place adverts in European Journal and local press inviting tenders.
- d) April 2007** – all tenders to be returned to Legal and Administrative Services.
- e) April 2007** – preparation of report for Children's Services Committee recommending contracts for approval.
- f) June 2007** – report to Children's Services Committee on contracts, listing the summary of successful tenders 2007/2008, seeking approval for those over £60,000 and asking Members to note those less than £60,000 but in excess of £30,000 (if required).
- g) June 2007** – letters issued to contractors informing them of the outcome of the tendering process.

3.1.2 For session 2007/2008 it will be necessary to secure approximately 100 contracts at an estimated draft budget of £426,366.00. Where the responsibility for transporting young people rests with Social Work Services, all costs associated with the transport of these pupils will be recovered from that department.

3.1.3 Over and above these secured contracts, Internal Transport, using vehicles presently owned or leased by Education and Cultural Services, will transport young people with additional support needs to and from specialist provision. The draft budget figure for this operation for session 2007/2008 is £485,249.00. Where these young people are the responsibility of other local authorities all the costs associated with the transport of the pupils is recovered from the relevant local authority.

3.2 Mainstream Contracts

3.2.1 Members will be aware that in respect of mainstream contracts Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) act as agents for West Dunbartonshire Council in securing contracts.

3.2.2 For session 2007/2008 the full budgeted cost of all SPT contracts (approximately 50) and inclusive of all administrative and advertising charges is £705,267.00.

- 3.2.3** Of the above 50 approximate SPT contracts, 8 at an approximate cost of £45,202.00 are due to be renegotiated for the start of session 2007/2008. It should be noted that this cost is based on the current contract specification, and is likely to change when the results of the tender process are known.
- 3.2.4** It should be further noted that the duration of mainstream contracts can vary from 1 year up to 5 years.
- 3.2.5** In line with the need to continuously improve the service, it is proposed that all primary school contracts due for renewal should be advertised with a restricted specification. This would mean that where bus contracts are concerned the advert would specify either a dedicated bus with seatbelts or a dedicated bus with seatbelts and escort.

4. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i) the Director be given approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with additional support needs for session 2007/2008 and beyond for contracts of 3 years duration;
- ii) the Director be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to renew mainstream contracts for session 2007/2008, and beyond for contracts of 3 or 5 years duration.

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Background Papers: No background papers

Wards Affected: All