

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Education Officer

Education Services Committee: 6 March 2019

Subject: School Transport Tendering Procedures Session 2019/20

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs Members of the proposed timetable for the processing of tenders for mainstream home-to-school contracts and for the transportation of 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 2019/2020, and up to session 2023/2024 where contracts are for 5 years in duration.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** To meet statutory requirements and Council policy, it is necessary to secure contracts for school transport for session 2019/2020. The process requires to follow a set timetable.
- 2.2** It is recommended that:
- i) Chief Education Officer be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to renew mainstream contracts for session 2019/2020, and beyond for contracts of up to 5 years in duration;
 - ii) Following completion of the tendering process, any tenders received will be considered by the Tendering Committee;
 - i) Notes that some transport of children with Additional Support Needs for session 2019/2020 and transporting young people to undertake courses with partner providers as part of their Senior Phase will be accommodated within the framework agreement for the Provision of Corporate Taxi Services and associated call off contracts.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 requires Education Authorities to make appropriate provision to assist pupils accessing education. The Act states that

free transport should 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.

- 3.2** Presently, West Dunbartonshire Council operate a more generous policy by providing free home-to-school 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.
- 3.3** The Education Authority is also required to make provision for pupils with Additional Support Needs to attend a school to meet the requirements.
- 3.4** In order to secure contracts for session 2019/2020 and beyond, it is now necessary to begin the process as timetabled below.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** In order to address the Council's requirements, the following stages and timescales are recommended:

Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Mainstream School Transport Contracts

4.1.1

- a) March 2019 – Present information to Educational Services Committee and seek approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for mainstream school transport and note procedures for Additional Support Needs contracts for session 2019/2020 and beyond;
- b) March 2019 – In consultation with SPT prepare information regarding contracts to be renewed;
- c) May/June 2019 – report to Tendering Committee seeking appropriate approvals;
- d) June 2019– SPT to be informed of the outcome of the tendering process.

- 4.1.2** For session 2019/2020, it will be necessary to externally secure ASN contracts at an estimated cost of £565,198 and transporting young people to undertake courses with partner providers as part of their Senior Phase at an estimated cost of £43,000. These costs can be accommodated within the allocated budget.

- 4.1.3** Over and above these externally secured contracts, using vehicles presently owned or leased by Education, Learning and Attainment and managed by Internal Transport, we will transport young people with Additional Support Needs to and from specialist provision. The estimated cost for this operation

is £584,278 for session 2019/2020, and can be accommodated within the allocated budget.

Mainstream Contracts

- 4.1.4 Members will be aware that in respect of mainstream contracts, SPT acts as agent for West Dunbartonshire Council in securing contracts.
- 4.1.5 For session 2019/2020, the estimated cost received from SPT based on the current mainstream school contracts is £760,978, and can be accommodated within the allocated budget.
- 4.1.6 It should be further noted that the duration of mainstream contracts can vary from 1 year up to 5 years.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 There are no people implications related to this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 Based on the current transport service requirements, the anticipated spend will be contained within budget. All costs will be subject to tender procedures.
- 6.2 All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £50,000 is subject to contract strategy. The contract strategy for Additional Support Needs Contracts was produced by the Corporate Procurement Unit in close consultation with Education Learning and Attainment. The contract strategy included but was not limited to; contract scope, service forward plan, the market, procurement model and routes – including existing delivery vehicles, roles and responsibilities, risks, issues and opportunities and on-going contract management. The framework agreement of the Provision of Corporate Taxi Services and associated call off contracts was approved at the Tendering Committee of 27 June 2018 for a period of 24 months with an optional extension of 12 months.
- 6.3 The Additional Support Needs Contracts will contribute to delivery of the Council strategic priorities through the development of a robust contract strategy which will explore the inclusion of possible community benefits which improve economic growth and employability or life chances for children and young people.
- 6.4 Further opportunities to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental impact for West Dunbartonshire Council through the contract will also be explored, eg through the use of Community Benefit Clauses.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 If timescales for tendering are met, there is no identified risk to the service in relation to this issue.
- 7.2 There is always a risk that tenders may exceed current estimates.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. The assessment demonstrates that the school transport arrangements promote equality in terms of access to education for pupils with additional special needs through the provision of an appropriate transport and escort service.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services and Section 95 Officer have been consulted with on the content of this paper.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 High quality school transport contracts contribute to the Council's strategic priority of delivering efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: EIA screening

Wards Affected: All