

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Education Services Committee: 10 March 2021**

Subject: School Transport Tendering Procedures Session 2021/22**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report details for Members 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 a 4 year duration for the ASN Framework Agreement and 5 year duration for mainstream contracts with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport from school session 2021/2022 to session 2025/2026.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** To meet statutory requirements and Council policy, it is necessary to secure contracts for school transport for session 2021/2022. The process requires to follow a set timetable.
- 2.2** It is recommended that:
- i) The Chief Education Officer be given approval to proceed in consultation with the Corporate Procurement Unit, the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with additional support needs for session 2021/2022 and beyond for contracts of up to 3 years duration with the option to extend for a further 12 months
 - ii) The Chief Education Officer be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to renew any mainstream contracts for session 2021/2022 to 2025/26; and
 - iii) Following completion of the tendering process, the proposed preferred tenderers will be submitted to the Tendering Committee for approval to award the Contract, Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System.

3. Background

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

- 3.2** The policy presently operated by West Dunbartonshire Council provides 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 of their additional support needs.
- 3.4** In order to secure contracts for session 2021/2022 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:
- a) March 2021 – Present information to Educational Services Committee and seek approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for Mainstream and Additional Support Needs (ASN) school transport;
 - b) March 2021 – In consultation with the Corporate Procurement Unit and SPT prepare information regarding contracts to be renewed;
 - c) May/June 2021 – report to Tendering Committee seeking appropriate approvals; and
 - d) June 2021– Contractors and SPT to be informed of the outcome of the tendering process.
- 4.1.2** For session 2021/2022, it will be necessary to secure external ASN contracts at an estimated cost of £584,488 and vocational school transport contracts at an estimated cost of £45,800. This cost can be accommodated within the allocated draft budget.
- 4.2** Members will be aware that in respect of mainstream contracts, SPT acts as agent for West Dunbartonshire Council in securing contracts.
- 4.2.1** For session 2021/2022, the estimated cost received from SPT based on the current mainstream school contracts is £740,295. This cost can be accommodated within the allocated draft budget.
- 4.2.2** 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 draft budget. All spend within the contract, Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System award 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.

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.

6.2 Further opportunities to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental impact for West Dunbartonshire Council through the contract will also be explored, via the use of Community Benefit Clauses included within the tender.

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 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.

9. Consultation

9.1 Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services and Section 95 Officer have been consulted 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