

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 5 March 2014

Subject: School Transport Tendering Procedures Session 2014/2015

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 2014/2015, and up to session 2018/2019 where contracts are for 5 years duration.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** To meet statutory requirements and Council policy, it is necessary to secure contracts for school transport for session 2014/2015. The process requires to follow a set timetable.
- 2.2** It is recommended that:
 - i) the Executive Director of Educational Services be given approval to proceed and award tenders for the transport of children with additional support needs which represent best value for the Authority;
 - ii) the Executive Director of Educational Services be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to renew and award mainstream contracts which represent best value for the Authority;

3. Background

- 3.1** The Director of Education submitted a full report on school transport issues to a meeting of the Education Committee of 24 April 1996.
- 3.2** The report presented in 1996 detailed the requirements of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 on 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.

- 3.3** 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.
- 3.4** The Education Authority is also required to make provision for pupils with additional support need to attend a school to meet the requirements of their additional support needs.
- 3.5** In order to secure contracts for session 2014/2015 and beyond, it is now necessary to begin the process as timetabled below.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Tendering Procedure

Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Mainstream Contracts

- 4.1.1 a) March 2014** – present information on contracts to be renewed to Educational Services Committee and seek approval to put tendering process into operation.
- b) March 2014** – prepare information regarding contracts to be renewed.
- c) March 2014** – place adverts in European Journal and local press inviting tenders.
- d) April 2014** – all tenders to be returned to Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services.
- e) June 2014** – letters issued to contractors informing them of the outcome of the tendering process.
- 4.1.2** For session 2014/2015, it will be necessary to secure approximately 90 ASN externally secured contracts at an estimated cost of £519,000. Where the responsibility for transporting young people is shared with the Community Health and Care Partnership a proportion of the costs associated with the transport of these pupils will be recovered from that department.
- 4.1.3** Over and above these externally secured contracts, using vehicles presently owned or leased by Educational Services and managed by Internal Transport, we will transport young people with additional support needs to and from specialist provision. The estimated budget figure for this operation is £520,000 for session 2014/2015.

4.2 Mainstream Contracts

- 4.2.1 Members will be aware that in respect of mainstream contracts, SPT acts as agent for West Dunbartonshire Council in securing contracts.
- 4.2.2 For financial year 2014/2015, Educational Services hold a budget of £697,000 covering all SPT contracts (currently 36). SPT has recently advised, after the Council had set its budget, that the expected cost of transport for 2014/15 is £712,000.
- 4.2.3 Of the above 36 SPT contracts, 14 at an estimated cost of £133,500 are due to be re-advertised for the start of session 2014/2015. 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.
- 4.2.4 It should be further noted that the duration of mainstream contracts can vary from 1 year up to 5 years .
- 4.2.5 If a change to the existing policy for school transport is required, a report will be submitted to the Educational Services Committee for approval as this will impact on operational matters.

5. People Implications

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

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 As advised at 4.2.2 above it is anticipated that the cost of SPT's contracts for 2014/15 will be around £15,000 in excess of current budget provision. This is subject to conclusion of the tendering processes for SPT and ASN secured contracts. Should the costs following the tendering exercise reflect the anticipated £15,000 over spend, the Department will require to manage this within its overall resources.

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

- 8.1 West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in the provision of services. The tendering process is designed with these duties in mind. The Council's procurement strategy will be followed to ensure equality of opportunity in the tendering process. When a tendering process is initiated and a contractor selected, the Council will ensure its partner meets the

statutory duties of a local authority in the provision of home-to-school transport.

9.1 Consultation

Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services and Finance and Resources Service 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 fit for purpose services.

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Appendices: **Appendix 1 - Equalities Impact Assessment**

Background Papers: No background papers

Wards Affected: All