

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Tendering Committee: 19 January 2011

Subject: School Transport Tendering Procedures Session 2011/2012

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 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 2011/2012, and up to session 2015/2016 where contracts are for 5 years duration.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Director of Education submitted a full report on school transport issues to a meeting of the Education Committee of 24 April 1996.
- 2.2** 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.
- 2.3** 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.
- 2.4** Further to the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee of 14 November 2007, Educational Services have implemented a change in the mode of transport from rail to bus.
- 2.5** 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 support needs.
- 2.6** In order to secure contracts for session 2011/2012 and beyond, it is now necessary to begin the process as timetabled below.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Tendering Procedure

Additional Support Needs (ASN) Contracts

- 3.1.1 a) January 2011** – present information on contracts to be renewed to Tendering Committee and seek approval to put tendering process into operation.
- b) February 2011** – prepare information regarding contracts to be renewed.
- c) February/March 2011** – place adverts in European Journal and local press inviting tenders.
- d) April 2011** – all tenders to be returned to Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.
- e) May/June 2011** – report to Committee on contracts, listing the summary of successful tenders 2011/2012 and seeking appropriate approvals.
- f) June 2011** – letters issued to contractors informing them of the outcome of the tendering process.

3.1.2 For session 2011/2012, it will be necessary to secure approximately 70 ASN externally secured contracts at an estimated cost of £434,370 (subject to approval by members). Where the responsibility for transporting young people rests with the Community Health and Care Partnership all costs associated with the transport of these pupils will be recovered from that department.

3.1.3 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 (subject to approval by members) for this operation is £655,820 for session 2011/2012.

3.2 Mainstream Contracts

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

3.2.2 For session 2011/2012, the full estimated budgeted cost (subject to approval by members) of all SPT contracts (approximately 52), inclusive of all administrative and advertising charges will be £945,073. The agency fee for SPT is in the region of £50,000.

3.2.3 Of the above 52 SPT contracts, 30 at an estimated cost of £731,588 are due to be re-let for the start of session 2011/2012. 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 Primary and Secondary contracts are advertised with a range of specifications including dedicated bus, escorts, seatbelts and CCTV. The choice of specification impacts on the cost.

3.2.6 It is anticipated that these contracts will be reported back in May/June 2011

3.2.7 If a change to the existing policy for school transport is required, a report will be submitted to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee for approval as this will impact on operational matters.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications related to this matter.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Based on current 2011/12 estimates for transport there is an anticipated shortfall of circa £40,000.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 If timescales for tendering are met, there is no identified risk to the service in relation to this issue.

6.2 There is always a risk that tenders may exceed current estimates.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 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.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 To meet statutory requirements and Council policy, it is necessary to secure contracts for school transport for session 2011//2012. The process requires to follow a set timetable.

8.2 It is recommended that:

- i) the Executive Director of Educational Services be given approval to proceed with the necessary arrangements to secure tenders for the transport of children with additional support needs for session 2011/2012 and beyond for contracts of up to 3 years duration;
- ii) the Executive Director of Educational Services be authorised to make the necessary arrangements in liaison with SPT to renew mainstream contracts for session 2011/2012, and beyond for contracts of up to 5 years duration;
- iii) delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Educational Services in consultation with the Convener of Education and Lifelong Learning to make any changes to the arrangements as may be required as a result of budget related decisions affecting school transport policy from the Council Meeting on 27 January 2011 to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for school transport for session 2011/2012; and
- iiii) a further report seeking approval for the contracts will be submitted to a future meeting of the Tendering Committee.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: No background papers

Wards Affected: All