

Record of officer decision

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| Decision title: | Award of SEN Transport Contracts – April 2020 (Ref 0420) |
| Date of decision: | 15 May 2020 |
| Decision maker: | Acting Assistant Director Highways & Transport |
| Authority for delegated decision: | <p>1. This is an operational decision with regard to Part 3 Section 7 para 3.7.5 of the constitution.</p> <p>2. The tendering process has been undertaken in accordance with the contract procedure rules at part 4 section 6 of the constitution.</p> <p>3. Scheme of delegation amendment 17 May 2017 All contracts must be approved by Assistant Director level or above.</p> |
| Ward: | Countywide |
| Consultation: | Chief Finance Officer, Solicitor to the Council and Members were consulted during the Passenger Transport Review reported to Cabinet in April 2017 which set out the approach to the provision of services for public, education and special needs transport |
| Decision made: | <p>The decision has been taken to:</p> <p>Award SEN school transport contracts as detailed below.</p> <p>Contract BF204P – The Brookfield School and The Arrow Group. Awarded to Blue Line Taxis for a 5 year term. The contract is flexible with provision being called off from the contract as required at pre-set mileage rates, it is estimated that the annual value will be £85,000 per annum, 1 compliant bid was received. The start date of this contract is subject to schools returning after Covid-19 closures.</p> <p>Contract HSC201 – The Hospital School. Awarded to Blue Line Taxis for a 5 year term. The contract is flexible with provision being called off from the contract as required at pre-set mileage rates, it is estimated that the annual value will be £31,000 per annum, 1 compliant bid was received. The start date of this contract is subject to schools returning after Covid-19 closures.</p> |
| Reasons for decision: | <p>To ensure that the council manages its transport services effectively whilst also meeting its statutory duties and ensures children are transported to school in line with eligibility.</p> <p>The previous contracts which were in place to support these educational facilities terminated at the end of the Spring Term 2020. Noting that the council needs to be prepared for potential school re-opening during the current term it is important to have these contracting arrangements in place so that transport will be provided if required.</p> <p>Development of a 'call off' contract was undertaken with advice from procurement officers and reflects the sporadic nature of school transport demands relating to these specific educational facilities. These demands result from referrals of individual pupils in relation to educational, health and wellbeing needs and can occur at any time and not necessarily</p> |

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| | conforming to fixed school terms. Transport eligibility in these cases results from the referral requiring the child to attend one of a small number of special educational facilities which in many cases is not their nearest school nor within the statutory walking distance. |
| Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations: | <p><u>Procurement and Legal</u></p> <p>The Passenger Transport Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) complies fully with current procurement legislation, the Councils contract procedure rules, and established best practice. Applicants to join the DPS have to complete a thorough evaluation questionnaire which is then checked for compliance by Passenger Transport and Commercial Services. Applicants are only allowed to join the DPS if they meet all of the specified criteria. The e-portal used to carry out tendering exercises under the DPS ensures that contracts are securely advertised to all qualifying parties. The Passenger Transport DPS ensures that contracts are awarded fairly and transparently based on specified evaluation criteria. Selection questionnaires, contract specifications and conditions of contract have been written in consultation with legal and commercial services.</p> <p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Contract BF204P combines 9 existing smaller transport contracts and will provide PRU taxi transport for the Brookfield School and Arrow Group on a sole supply basis. The contract will provide transport for students who hold statutory entitlement to free transport assistance.</p> <p>Contract HSC201 combines 6 existing smaller transport contracts and will provide taxi transport for the Hospital School on a sole supply basis. The contract will provide transport for students who hold statutory entitlement to free transport assistance whilst they are accessing education at the Hospital School during periods of illness.</p> <p>Contract BF204P achieves an estimated annual saving of £21,000 vs existing contract rates, and contract HSC201 a saving of £2,500 per annum. This combined saving of £23,500 will reduce the forecast overspend on SEN transport of £180k for the 2020/21 financial year.</p> <p>Entering into these contracts at the present time when schools have been closed as a result of COVID-19 does not present a financial risks as the nature of the contracts means that costs will be only incurred if services are called off.</p> |
| Details of any alternative options considered and rejected: | Not to proceed with re-tendering or the award of contracts. This is not recommended as this is likely to result in services being withdrawn and could mean that the council breaches its statutory responsibilities relating to school transport. |
| Details of any declarations of interest made: | None |

Signed

Mairead Lane
Acting Assistant Director Highways & Transport

Date: 15 May 2020