

## Record of officer decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>Award of School Transport Contracts (Ref Area 5)</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	25 June 2021
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Acting Assistant Director Highways and Transport
<b>Authority delegated decision:</b>	Economy & Place Scheme of Delegation updated 28 April 2021 Transport and Access Line 78 – Award of contracts for future passenger transport services tendered
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>The following key stakeholders have been consulted specifically on this retendering program.</p> <p>Cabinet member infrastructure and transport Cabinet member for children and families Transport operators Schools involved in the tendering program Director economy and place Director children's and families Assistant director education development and skills</p> <p>The contents of this report have been reviewed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Legal services</li> </ul>
<b>Decision made:</b>	Award mainstream school transport contract's for a 5 year period as detailed in Appendix 1
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>To ensure that the council manages its transport services effectively whilst also seeking to achieve value for money, realise service efficiencies and contribute to ongoing savings requirements whilst also meeting its statutory duties and ensures children are transported to school in line with eligibility.</p> <p>The procurement of these contracts has been carried out as part of a review of all mainstream educational contracts throughout the County. A number of geographical areas will be tendered over a 3 year period.</p> <p>To implement the recorded officer decision <a href="#">‘Retendering programme for mainstream school and college transport’</a> dated 19 January 2019.</p> <p>To contribute to the Highways and Transport savings target S18 set for the 2021/22 financial year “Review all mainstream school and college bus transport provision utilising bespoke journey planning software to develop more efficient routes, optimise vehicle use and reduce contracting costs”.</p> <p>To ensure equal access to services for people with disabilities and ensure that the council operates its educational transport services in accordance with the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) dated 1st January 2020.</p>

**Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/e quality considerations:**

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.

The program schedule has been designed to ensure suitable time is available for schools, members, and transport operators to comment on the proposed new routes to schools before the issue of formal tender documents.

The PSVAR require buses and coaches to be fully wheelchair accessible when carrying fare paying passengers. By operating school and college transport contracts that meet the specification of the regulations the council will be meeting its duty to ensure equality. Furthermore, the operation of PSVAR compliant vehicles will ensure that the council retains the ability to charge fare paying students and will maintain income at current levels.

The table below highlights the impact on annual school transport costs as this programme has progressed. The table indicates the cumulative annual contract reduced costs of £359k following the first five rounds of retendering (including this round). Once adjusted to take account of reduced income from paying passengers the net full year reduced cost is £282k. In addition the number of routes being operated has reduced from 104 to 79 reflecting more efficient route planning.

The in year reduced cost for 2021/22 achieved by this latest round of tendering, area 5, is £49,250, contributing to the delivery of passenger transport services within budget allocation.

Area	Pre Tendering		Post Tendering	
	Routes	Annual Value	Routes	Annual Value
1 - Bromyard	14	£280,943	11	£252,540
2 - Wigmore	23	£631,033	16	£483,658
3 - Weobley & Kington	19	£479,408	18	£489,949
4 - Ross-on-Wye	19	£402,762	11	£277,134
5 - Golden Valley	29	£577,322	23	£508,516
6 - Ledbury	10	£223,697	Jan-22	
7 - Hereford	20	£471,976	Apr-22	

**Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:**

Options for progressing the retendering considered impacts on the local supplier market.

Options to undertake retendering in one phase were rejected due to the potential destabilising impacts on the local supplier market and the practicalities of ensuring all parents and pupils could be updated on service changes.

Not progressing the retendering is rejected as it will not provide sufficient assistance in the council's aims to reduce costs and contribute to budget

	<p>pressures. In addition, it will not address the issue of ensuring all contracts are managed in accordance with up to date terms and conditions.</p> <p>A phased programme was developed to limit impacts on suppliers and to provide time for them to make business adjustments in the event that currently held contracts are lost. The programme also includes a geographical component which means that changes will roll out area by area over time and this will also assist suppliers in making adjustments. Phasing will also provide time to ensure that parents and pupils can be kept informed of service changes.</p>
<p><b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b></p>	<p>None</p>

Signed

Mairead Lane  
Acting Assistant Director Highways & Transport

Date: 25 June 2021