

Cabinet – 30 April 2014

Assisted Transport and Taxi Framework Contract Award

(Appendix 1 is exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended))

Portfolio: Councillor R. Andrew – Children's Services

Related portfolio: Councillor McCracken – Social Care

Service: Assisted Transport Service and Taxi service

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to award framework contracts for Assisted Transport and Taxi services, and to approve the delegation to the Executive Director to allocate individual routes for Assisted Transport and Taxi services to framework providers.

2 Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the award of Framework Contracts for Assisted Transport and Taxi services to the providers listed in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Children's Services to allocate individual routes for Assisted Transport and Taxi services during June to August for routes to commence from September 2014.

3 Report detail

- 3.1 This report follows on from the Cabinet decision in December 2013 which gave approval to start a corporate procurement process for Assisted Transport and Taxi services for children, adults and other vulnerable groups.
- 3.2 An Invitation to Tender (ITT) was issued on 4 March 2014, with providers returning completed bids on 8 April 2014. The ITT was placed on the Walsall Council In-Tend system, an electronic tendering system which is used within the Council for strategic procurement exercises.
- 3.3 In addition to an advert for these services being published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU notice), a letter to all known providers was sent

prior to the ITT going live to advise them to register on the In-Tend system, and a follow up letter was sent on 5 March 2014 to give more details about a training session for using the In-Tend system on the 14 March 2014. Copies were also placed in the One Stop Shop and Licensing provided details of operators who are licensed with the authority but who do not hold a current contract so that Officers could be assured that as many local businesses as possible had access to tender for the contract.

- 3.4 In order to support providers, a briefing session on the In-Tend system was held on 14 March 2014. The session included a demonstration of the system, including how to access documents and upload questions and complete documentation. This was run by Council Officers with an understanding of the system, and Procurement and Transport Officers were available to answer general questions about the process. This was attended by more than 25 providers.
- 3.5 Providers also had the opportunity, throughout the tender process, of asking questions via the In-Tend system and receiving an answer from the Project on specific queries.
- 3.6 The evaluation process commenced on 10th April 2014, following the tender opening on 9th April by the Leader of the Council.
 - 3.6.1 The tender evaluation criteria was weighted with 30% of the score being available for Quality criteria and 70% for the Price, based on the need to manage within budget and commitment to address ongoing quality development through monitoring and training.
 - 3.6.2 The prices were provided based upon the type of vehicle and a banded approach, e.g. price of return journey up to 5 miles, up to 10 miles, etc. An attendant price per hour was also requested, therefore two lists of prices were generated – one with attendants and one without.
 - 3.6.3 Quality was assessed in 4 ways; compliance with licensing and vehicle requirements (pass / fail), statement of good standing which examines risks or potential of corruption, bribery etc. (pass / fail), quality questions (making up 25% of the overall 30% for quality) and case studies (making up 5% of the 30% for quality). The Quality questions were evaluated by Officers of the Council to set criteria. The case studies were evaluated by a Senior Officer of the Council, with 4 parents and 1 Adult Social Care Service User. They represented real life scenarios and asked the providers to identify how they would respond to the scenarios. In some cases providers were asked to clarify their responses.
- 3.7 It is recommended that all the operators who met the tender pass/fail criteria are accepted onto the framework as listed in appendix 1.
- 3.8 The Transport Manager will manage the process for Home to School Transport, and the current Adult Social Care and Inclusion teams will manage their requirements. Ad hoc homelessness or Looked After Children taxi requirements will be able to utilise the framework to find the most cost effective transportation for their needs.

- 3.9 All providers have been given the deadline of 31st May for the vehicles to be available for inspection to ensure the safety of the service and provide equity for all providers. Providers who wish to purchase new vehicles in advance of allocation of routes will do so at their own risk. The council cannot accept a commitment to purchase or lease a vehicle as it cannot manage the risk of allocating a route when a vehicle is not available from the start of term and/or the vehicles does not pass inspection. When the Special Educational Need (SEN) pupil requirements are known in May/June 2014, routes will be allocated based upon the type of vehicle needed and ranking position on the framework from the 1st June until mid-August.
- 3.10 The process for the route allocation for SEN assisted transport will be managed by the Transport Manager and route contracts will only be offered to those companies that appear on the Framework.
- 3.11 The Transport Team will carry out a route optimisation exercise to develop the most efficient and cost effective routes to transport the children to and from the schools. Consideration will be given to location, their needs, loading and unloading and traffic considerations and vehicle requirement; no route within Walsall will be created lasting more than one hour.
- 3.12 Once the vehicle requirement for each of the approximately 179 routes has been established, contractors will be selected by their rank position based on the price/quality score - those who rank top in each of the categories / bandings will be given first option on the routes offered. Providers will be offered the maximum number of routes based on vehicle requirement and provider known capacity. Once capacity is reached then the next ranked provider will be contacted. No provider will be allocated more than 20% of total contract value to assure market diversity and security of provision.
- 3.13 The following special schools will be allocated first;
- Jane Lane
 - Castle School
 - Mary Elliott
 - Old Hall
 - Oakwood
 - Elmwood
 - Phoenix
- All other schools will be offered thereafter.
- 3.14 The ongoing monitoring of the contracts will further enhance the quality and safeguarding elements of the specification, with regular monitoring on site and meetings with providers to ensure that quality standards are raised and that parental, school and service user concerns are dealt with promptly and that providers are given the opportunity to work with the Council to improve the services available. A regular satisfaction survey of parents will also help to address quality issues.

4 Council priorities

- 4.1 **Improving Safeguarding, Learning and the Life Chances for Children and Young People;** the provision of this service ensures suitable, safe home to school transport for eligible children to facilitate their attendance at school and support their learning. The new specification is designed to enhance safeguarding and the overall positive experience of transport.
- 4.2 **Improving Health and Wellbeing, including Independence for Older People;** the assisted transport service enables independence for older people, thereby improving their health and wellbeing.
- 4.3 **Supporting businesses to thrive;** the Framework approach allows the Council to ensure we have a wide range of local businesses to meet the needs of the citizens of Walsall who require assisted transport.

5 Risk management

A full analysis of risk has been undertaken as part of the project management approach, in accordance with the council's agreed approach, with risk management action plans in place for "high" risks. Key risks summarised below:

Risk	Mitigation
Changes in legislation covering personalisation reduce demand	No firm commitment on volumes to be provided in the contract.
Transition from old contracts to new contracts. Change in transport provider may cause issues of trust and familiarisation.	Timeline has been designed with implementation date to allow for introductory sessions between families and the providers.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 Current expenditure on these services is approximately £2.1 million per annum, including £1.8 million on Children's services.
- 6.2 Based on a 3 year contract term, the total contract value is estimated to be around £6 million, however, as service users opt for personal budgets this contract value may fall over time.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 The services to be included in the contract include services that the Council has a legal duty to provide (pursuant to sections 508A, 508B, 508C and schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996) and where the Council has a duty to assist with transport arrangements in certain circumstances set out in Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 and Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the specification will be designed to ensure these are met. The contract has been procured in accordance with both the Council's Contract Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (as amended).
- 7.2 The Council also has a responsibility to respond to requests for assistance by assessing needs and determining eligibility for services under the NHS Community

Care Act and Department of Health 'Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First; A whole system approach to eligibility for social care' 2010.

8 Property implications

8.1 There are no property implications as a direct result of this report.

9 Health and wellbeing implications

9.1 The service will help enable all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives by providing access to concessionary transport for young people

9.2 The successful provider(s) will be required to provide services that assist social inclusion and support the health and well being of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs, Older People and other vulnerable groups.

10 Staffing implications

10.1 The individual routes will be offered, and the contracts managed by existing staff within the Children's Commissioning Team and Joint Commissioning Unit.

11 Equality implications

11.1 The service will help ensure that all children have the right to access education regardless of the ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure the service meets the needs of all groups.

12 Consultation

12.1 Parents of children and young people with special educational needs were invited to participate in a survey about the service, to which there were 129 responses. Parents were also invited to attend one of three drop in sessions, and Officers attended a number of existing forums throughout the process of developing the specification to ensure that it meets the needs of the service users.

12.2 The Youth Opinions Unite team worked with young people enabling them to participate in the survey on the transport service and provide feedback

12.3 Special School Head Teachers were also invited to review the specification and they have provided feedback on the process to establish the new framework.

Background papers

Cabinet – 11 December 2013 Assisted Transport and Taxi Contract

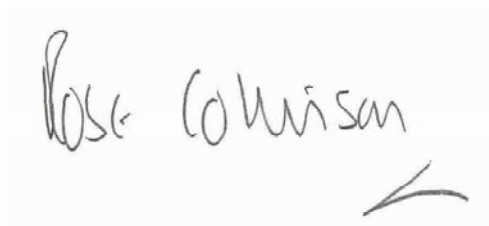
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Signatures

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rose Collinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Signed:
Rose Collinson
Executive Director
22 April 2014

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Signed:
Councillor R Andrew
Portfolio holder
22 April 2014

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Appendix 1

List of Contractors to be awarded Framework Contracts

To be inserted 28th April 2014