

Cabinet – 22 October 2008

Adult Transport Services Reconfiguration

Portfolio: Councillor McCracken, Social Care, Health & Housing

Service: Social Care and Inclusion

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

To consider proposals for the seeking of expressions of interest in the reconfiguration of the provision of transport for Adults to enable efficiencies to be identified and delivered. The policy of charging service users for transport is outside of the scope of the project although it is likely to impact on the demand for services.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That cabinet authorise officers to seek formal expressions of interest from a range of external providers in the management and delivery of a reconfigured adult transport service and undertake the necessary internal consultations.
- 2.2 That cabinet receive a further report on detailing any proposals arising from the outcome of this exercise at a future meeting.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The provision of transport services to Adults across a range of client groups has been traditionally provided by a mix of in house direct provision through mini buses and externally provided hired transport with drivers or taxis. Adult Services deliver vital services to some of the most vulnerable people within the communities. These include:
 - Older People
 - Adults with Learning Disabilities
 - People with Physical & Sensory Disabilities

Transport services across these service areas need to deliver flexible and efficient services that cater for:

- Individual travel
- Group travel
- Wheelchair accessibility
- With/without escort/attendant

Service users require a number of key aspects of the service that are more important than who actually provides the transport. These include:

- Consistent and agreed pick –up/drop – off times
- Journey's generally no more than 1 hour
- Continuity of escort/carer (where possible)
- Well- maintained, clean and comfortable vehicles
- Non – stigmatizing ie ordinary transport

The management resource to operate this service is currently within Fleet Services whilst commissioning transport is undertaken by the appropriate care worker. Analysis has identified that in excess of £2 million a year is spent on this service. In view of the high level of expenditure some work had been undertaken, as part of an overall efficiency and procurement project, to identify where potential efficiencies could be found within the service.

3.2 This work suggested a need to reconfigure the current service on the grounds of future services needing to be more flexible and tailored to meet individual needs as well identifying opportunities to deliver efficiencies and lower costs. Consequently, Subject Matter Experts, with specialist national and international expertise in transport and logistics were engaged in May 2008 by the council to:

- Identify the needs and preferences of end service users within the Council's commitment to develop more locally accessible services , offering greater flexibility and choice
- Consult with key personnel to ensure the transport requirements of current service users were fully understood, and ensure that new proposals take their needs and views into account
- Review the cost base and procedures of the predominantly in-house transport service across SC& I Adult Services and validate the base line level of expenditure
- Undertake soft market testing and benchmark comparative market costs to provide an objective picture of lower achievable costs through outsourcing to a provider with specialist expertise
- Undertake an objective and comparative review of the outsourced 'Home to School' transport service, managed by SERCO in Walsall
- Independently model potential savings and added benefits to the Council Transport service provision within Social Care and Inclusion (SC&I) – Adult Services

- 3.3 As a consequence of this work, the need to seek expressions of interest from external providers to support the council in reconfiguring the transport service was identified.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

The council currently spend around £2.2 million a year on providing transport services within Adults Services. Benchmarking of similar organisations has identified that efficiencies can be achieved through a reconfiguration of the service. The current economic climate is likely to place pressure on existing budgets given the inflationary pressures particularly around fuel.

This project will contribute to the corporate procurement savings programme for 2008/09 and beyond, any efficiencies or savings delivered through this project will be accounted for as part of that process and not provide any additional revenue cash releasing resources to either corporate or SC&I budgets.

4.2 Legal:

The provision of transport services for both adults and children fall within the remit of the EU procurement rules as they are a Part A service which require the adoption of the full procurement procedures. Whilst the provision of transport for children has been tendered as part of the Serco contract, external legal advice has been sought which confirms that, despite the services being similar adults were not included within the scope of the education contract and an independent tender exercise must be carried out in respect of any changes in the provision of adult transport.

Staff affected by any reconfiguration of the service are likely to be captured by the Transfer of Undertakings regulations and any new arrangement will have to have regard to this.

4.3 Staffing:

A number of operational and management staff may be affected by any reconfiguration of this service and TUPE regulations are likely to apply. However this will be affected by the amount of time staff spend on specific driving duties as opposed to undertaking care based activities. As detailed proposals emerge formal staff consultations will need to be carried out.

5. Citizen impact

The provision of adult transport is to the more vulnerable and dependant members of society and it is important that the development of any new arrangement must ensure that a flexible, safe and responsive service is provided. The changing agenda for care nationally and within the borough will require a more personalised service centred on a persons need.

6. Community safety

Procedures will be put in place to protect vulnerable service users through safeguarding checks and the use of chaperoned transport where appropriate.

7. Environmental impact

Reconfiguring existing arrangements to provide more efficient and effective operational arrangements will reduce the impact that transport has on the environment. The move towards more personalised care enabling people to live in their homes will involve carers going to people's homes and therefore increase vehicle movements.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

The provision of transport for vulnerable people and procedures will be incorporated into the contract to ensure that the appropriate safeguards are in place.

8.2 Performance management:

Performance indicators will be built into any contractual arrangement to ensure that the quality and flexibility of the service can be measured.

9. Equality implications

Transport will be provided using vehicles that have been specifically adapted to meet the needs of the service user within a range of client groups.

10. Consultation

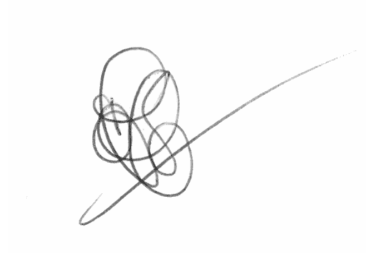
Commissioning managers have been consulted on the proposed arrangement. Further detailed consultation will need to be undertaken once the proposals have been received and the precise nature of any reconfiguration is determined.

Background papers

Author

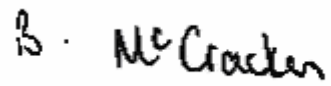
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David Martin
Executive Director

9 October 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a capital 'B' followed by a dot and the name 'McCracken' in a cursive style.

Councillor Barbara McCracken
Portfolio holder

9 October 2008