

Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	26 May 2020
Portfolio	Councillor Heakin (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)
Report Author	Tracy Jubb
Public/Private Document	Public

SEN Home to School/College Transport Contract

Executive Summary

- 1.1 A key decision is required as the SEN Home to School/College Transport contract needs to go back out to tender and its value is £1,685,098 per annum.
- 1.2 The new contract will be in place from 1.9.2020 until 31.7.2026
- 1.3 The value of the contract is approximately £10 million over the six year contract period.
- 1.4 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport for learners with special educational needs when it is not possible for the child or young person to attend a school or college near to their home because the setting is unable to meet their additional needs. See sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006).

Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that members approve the proposal to re-tender for the Home to School/College Transport contract as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport for this cohort of learners.

Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide this service as outlined in sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 509AD, and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 which were inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006).

Key Points for Consideration

- 4.1 Current contract ends 31.7.2020 and a new contract needs to be in place for September 2020 as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide home to school/college transport for eligible SEN children and young people.
- 4.2 At the start of the academic year (2019-20) the Council had 161 routes operating and 560 children and young people using SEN Home to School/College Transport. It is predicted that the number of routes will increase in 2020-21 as more children and young people require specialist educational settings.
- 4.3 The new home to school transport contract would be in the form of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS). The benefits of this include:
- flexibility for suppliers to be added to the DPS arrangement at any stage of its lifetime, in other words open/ongoing access;
 - cost savings through increased competition;
 - opportunity to stimulate markets;
 - potential to increase access for harder to reach suppliers including small medium enterprises.
- 4.4 The current contract uses a DPS and has been successful, It allows for mini-competition when a supplier for a new route is required and allows the Local Authority to choose from a range of suppliers that have already had all the necessary checks and clearance. Using a DPS has allowed for greater flexibility.
- 4.5 **Alternatives Considered**
- There is no reasonable alternative if the Council is to comply with procurement and education regulations. The Council has to provide home to school/college transport and does not have the vehicles and drivers in-house to operate all the routes required.

Costs and Budget Summary

- 5.1 In 2020-21 the forecast spend is £1,685,098. The contract period is for 6 years totalling £10,110,588. However, the value of the contract is likely to increase year on year as it is predicted more children and young people will be eligible for transport.

Financial Year	Home to School (E0212) and Home to College (E1272) Transport Spend
2020-21 (Forecast spend) based on last year's spend and includes 2.2% for inflation	£1,685,098
2019-20 (Actual spend)	£1,648,824
2018-19 (Actual spend)	£1,489,808
2017-18 (Actual spend)	£1,418,707

Risk and Policy Implications

- 6.1 The recommendation(s) in this report involve risk as Legal challenge and reputational damage to the Council if a new contract is not in place.

Consultation

- 7.1 A marketplace event took place on 9th January 2020. Current suppliers were invited to the event. The process of bidding and enrolling onto the new DPS was clearly explained.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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8. Not applicable	
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For Further Information Contact:	Tracy Jubb, Tel: 01706 925056, Tracy.Jubb@Rochdale.Gov.UK
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