

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 15 June 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Passenger Transport Contract Tenders

**WARDS:** Borough-Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To notify the Executive Board that transport tenders are to be published via The Chest in accordance with EU Public Procurement Regulations 2015 in line with Standing Orders. The current Passenger Transport Contract Framework is due to expire in August 2017, as a consequence a new electronic procedure through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) process is to be procured and be in place for September 2017. This will cover the period to August 2021, with the option for two further one year extensions. This is a report for information purposes, to comply with Procurement Standing Orders due to the accumulative annual value of the contracts projected to be in excess of £1.5 million.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board**

- 1) acknowledge the Passenger Transport Contract Tenders on behalf of designated specialist assessment departments within the People Directorate; and**
- 2) support the requirement to tender and procure passenger transport contracts through an electronic DPS process.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Council's Transport Co-ordination section is responsible for a complex range of passenger transport contracts and arrangements for vulnerable children and adults on behalf of specific departments within the People Directorate with full support from the Procurement Division. These arrangements, if not provided by the Council's in-house fleet of passenger transport vehicles, must be contracted out for a period of up to four years to external transport providers. Such providers typically include licensed taxi operators and drivers as well as minibus companies. Where possible, however, priority is given to allocating passengers onto the Council's in-house passenger fleet provision. This is particularly for transport services that include multiple wheelchair

users due to cost effectiveness and the fact that there is a severe shortage of wheelchair accessible minibuses in the immediate area.

- 3.2 Designated departments within People Directorate are responsible for providing the transport requirements for any vulnerable passenger that has an identified need and is entitled to assisted transport to educational establishments, adult day care facilities and community based settings respectively. Transport Co-ordination is then responsible for procuring the most cost effective and practical means of transport, considering the health and safety of vulnerable passengers, depending on any mobility difficulties and additional needs of each passenger.
- 3.3 The Passenger Transport DPS process is a mechanism that enables the Council to identify transport providers who are capable of delivering the specialist nature of transport contracts on its behalf and to the standard identified in the current conditions of contract. The DPS process provides a platform to advertise long-term and short-term contracts over a reduced advertising period as all of the qualifying requirements have previously been met by the providers.
- 3.4 To successfully register on the DPS, transport providers are required to demonstrate their capabilities of delivering contracts to the required quality and standard of service by completing a Mandatory Service Questionnaire (MSQ), this contains a series of relevant questions relating to the contract requirements.
- 3.5 All vulnerable childrens and adult transport contracts will be tendered as individual contracts with each specifying the minimum size/capacity of vehicle to be provided, the specialist needs/requirements of the passengers to be transported and whether a passenger assistant is to be provided (by the transport provider).
- 3.6 It should be noted that there are currently 118 passenger transport contracts in operation. This includes 88 Special Education contracts, 4 Statutory School Age contracts, 7 Looked After Children contracts and 19 Adult Social Care contracts. The accumulative annual spend for the above external contracts equates to £1,550,000.
- 3.7 There are currently 16 transport providers, consisting of taxi and minibus contractors, on the current closed framework providing the above transport requirements. The DPS process has the potential to attract additional transport suppliers which will enable extra capacity to cope with the volume of contract work required to be provided.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### 5.1 None

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

All of the passenger transport contracts are constantly monitored to ensure that the required level and quality of service is offered to passengers on behalf of designated departments within the People Directorate.

### 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

A number of the passenger transport contracts to be tendered are to provide accessible transport services for vulnerable young people and adults to facilities providing key work based opportunities, training, lifelong learning and skills.

### 6.3 Healthy Halton

All of the passenger transport contracts to be tendered provide essential access to a wide range of activities and key facilities across the Borough and to out-of-borough establishments as required. Therefore, passenger transport directly helps to assist and ensure that vulnerable children and adults live a healthy and active lifestyle.

### 6.4 A Safer Halton

Where passengers are not capable of and/or confident enough to travel by public transport, transport services provided enable all passengers to access facilities in a safe manner, ensuring they are socially included. Travel Training is provided, where identified and appropriate, to individuals to provide them with the skills, confidence and independence to travel by public transport in a non-intimidating environment.

### 6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

### 7.1 Funding reductions will pose a risk to the passenger transport services the Council are required to provide. Relevant assessment departments in the People Directorate may exert more stringent controls and criteria within their transport/travel policies and practice in order to manage reduced budgetary constraints.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 Passenger transport service contracts are constantly monitored to ensure the operation of these services embrace equality and diversity issues in line with the Equality Act.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 9.1 None for the purposes of the Act.