



**Report of:** Head of Passenger Transport

**Report to:** Chief Officer, Civic Enterprise Leeds

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> December 2015

**Subject:** Passenger Transport – Contract extension for the provision of Taxi and Private hire providers to supply home to school transport. YORE-9G4EG4

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. Passenger Transport is commissioned by Children's services and Adult Social care to provide transport for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) and children who are in care of the authority requiring home to school transport, as well as older people and adults with learning difficulties on order they can access day services.
2. This is currently managed through a mix of our own in house fleet as well as the utilisation of a framework agreement for Taxi and Private hire providers to support the service.
3. The current Framework agreement was let on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014 and is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016. The agreement allows for an extension of up to 24 months, to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018.
4. The current framework has 25 Taxi and Private hire providers available to support the service in the delivery of a transport service.
5. Over the past four- five years, the service has seen a reduction in the number of taxi and private hire operators who are available to provide the various vehicle types, in particular wheelchair accessible minibuses.
6. Further to this, at the same time the service has seen an increase in the demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles to transport children and young people with particularly complex needs.

7. Given the two factors above, the service needs to review the current level of resources and work with the market place to increase the overall market availability.
8. This report recommends an extension to the existing agreement, from July 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, during which time the service will review the vehicle supply mix (inhouse or private hire) and will consult with both existing providers as well as any possible new ones, who currently provide care services for the Council and who may be interested in investing in a minibus and working with the service in the long term.
9. This report seeks approval to extend the existing framework agreement from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **Recommendations**

The Chief Officer, Civic Enterprise Leeds is requested to approve the contract extension for the supply of Taxi and Private providers, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, in accordance with the contract terms and conditions.

## **1.0 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To seek approval to extend the current framework agreement to those providers listed in appendix A, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, in accordance with the contract terms and conditions.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Passenger transport is commissioned by Children's service's and Adult Social Care to provide home to school transport for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) and children who are looked after, as well as adults with learning difficulties in order that they can access day services.
- 2.2 The service is currently provided by a mix of our own in-house fleet as well as the utilisation of a framework agreement from which 25 taxi and private hire providers are invited to bid for routes as and when required.
- 2.3 Over time the service has seen a reduction in the market availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, but at the same time the demand for such vehicles continues to rise as the number of children with complex needs requiring transport to and from school increases.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Passenger Transport is required to transport over 3500 customers each day. This is managed through our own in house fleet but also in partnership with Taxi and Private hire providers, who through a framework agreement, are able to support the service with the provision of wheelchair accessible minibuses, standard minibuses, cars, and also some companies are able to supply passenger assistants who support the young child or adult with learning difficulties throughout their journey.
- 3.2 A framework is required in order that transport is provided for some of the most vulnerable customers in Leeds. Without the support from taxi and private hire providers children with statements of special educational needs and children who are in care of the authority would not be able to attend school and adults with learning difficulties would be unable to access day services.
- 3.3 The framework contract was awarded on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014 for two years, to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016, with an option to extend for a further two years.
- 3.4 The contract has been closely managed throughout the contract period and regular review meetings are held with the providers. Since the contract let all contractors have been invited to attend briefings on safeguarding which have been managed by the councils Taxi and Private hire licensing service. Thus ensuring contractors are kept up to date with various changes and legislation.
- 3.5 Over the past four – five years the service has seen a significant reduction in the number of taxi and private hire providers who are able to support the service with a supply of minibuses, but in particular wheelchair accessible minibuses.

- 3.6 Further to this, there is an increase in the demand for transport for children and young people with complex needs who need transport in wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- 3.7 As a result of the two factors above, early in 2016 the service intends undertaking a review of the current supply mix of both the inhouse service and that available by taxi and private hire.
- 3.8 Secondly the service intends consulting with both existing providers as well as care providers who already work with Council and who may be interested in investing in the purchase of a vehicle and working with the service long term.
- 3.9 Following these two work streams the service may be in a better position to have assurance that as demand for transport increases, we are able to support that demand.
- 3.10 In order to allow sufficient time to undertake this work the existing framework needs extending till March 2017.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 Under the direction of the Chief Officer CEL, a strategic review of the service was undertaken in 2015. Throughout this process a number of briefings, OBA sessions and meetings took place with all stakeholders. It is as a result of these sessions that the service agreed to review its mix of availability.

Further meetings are planned for early Jan 2016, with existing private hire providers who are already on the framework, but who do not currently provide minibuses, and colleagues in PPPU are working on identifying care providers who already work with the Council and who may be interested in investing in minibuses as an add-on to the overall care package they provide.

Any impact on the Councils Taxi and Private hire licensing service, will be discussed prior to implementation.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening report has been considered and a full Equality Impact Assessment was completed at the start of the tender process.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 The proposals within this report will contribute to the continued delivery of an effective Passenger Transport service for Leeds City Council.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The services will be procured through the standard procedure in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules to assure value for money.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 This is consequence of a previous key decision and as a result is a significant operational decision and therefore not available for call in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 If Passenger transport did not have a framework contract which supports the service in the provision of transport some of the most vulnerable children in Leeds would not access school and adults with learning difficulties would be unable to access day services.

4.6.2 If the existing contract was not extended and simply re-tendered in July 2016, there is a risk that the number of contractors available to support the demand would reduce even further and given the demand for transport is increasing the service may be put in a position where it was unable to provide a statutory service for home to school transport.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Passenger Transport is commissioned to provide home to school transport for children and young people and transport for adults with learning difficulties in order they can access day services.

5.2 The service is provided through a mix of an in house fleet and the utilisation of a framework agreement whereby taxi and private hire providers are invited to bid for routes as and when required.

5.3 Without the framework agreement such services would not be provided.

5.4 Over the past four – five years the service has seen a reduction in the number of providers who are able to provide wheelchair accessible minibuses. This is coupled with a significant increase in the demand for transport, particularly for children with complex needs.

5.5 The existing framework agreement needs extending till March 2017, in order to allow the service sufficient time to review the current mix of availability and to consult with existing providers as well as care providers who may be interested in investing in a minibus , as an add-on to their current care services.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Chief Officer, Civic Enterprise Leeds is requested to approve the contract extension for the supply of Taxi and Private providers, from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, in accordance with the contract terms and conditions

6.2 Background documents<sup>1</sup>

None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available for download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

