

Report of: Executive Officer, Taxi & Private Hire Licensing

Report to: Licensing Committee

Date: 5 December 2017

Subject: Timetable for procuring Driver Training

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		

Summary of main issues

The Head of Elections, Licensing & Registration has approved a request to commence a procurement exercise for a dynamic purchasing provision of Taxi and Private Hire Driver Training for up to an initial 4 years.

The council currently requires all new taxi and private hire drivers to undertake training before being awarded a licence. Driver training is currently split between two council-provided services and several contracted suppliers.

The council is expecting the number of applicants to remain stable and possibly increase from 800-900 each year. Under the ring-fenced regulations for taxi and private hire licensing, the applicants pay for their training, with annual spend estimated to continue or rise above around £120-150k per annum.

There has been a review and consultation on driver training provision during 2017, with recommendations that the council consider procuring driver training from more than one organisation to increase training capacity and speed up the length of time between commencing training and award of a licence. A dynamic purchasing arrangement is recommended to contract a number of suppliers who can each provide all modules of the driver related training and assessment centre. This aims to improve our training capacity and maintaining quality and standards, while ensuring compliance with procurement rules.

The council is in the early stages of a multi-authority project, involving the five West Yorkshire authorities and City of York. The project aims to align more closely ('harmonise') the elements

of taxi and private hire licensing and enforcement across the sub-region to improve passenger safety. It is possible that the project will approve a common training standard across all six authorities, with an option for a transferable driver qualification, although the other authorities may choose to continue to provide training inhouse. This development may act to discourage the practice of some drivers choosing to train in districts with lower entry requirements or faster training, and working in neighbouring districts.

Recommendations

Licensing Committee is recommended to note the approval of a procurement exercise and timetable for a dynamic purchasing provision of Taxi and Private Hire Driver Training for up to an initial 4 years.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members that procurement has commenced and inform them of the timetable for the dynamic purchasing provision of Taxi and Private Hire Driver Training for an initial 4 years.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 All new drivers are required to attend or pass six training modules before being awarded a licence. The information in **Appendix A** shows a list of driver training, the current providers, and the cost to the driver. It should be noted that while Leeds City Council requires significant training at initial application stage, we do not require existing drivers to attend refresher training, unlike some other authorities.
- 2.2 Response to consultation earlier in 2017 reveals that some people feel the council could do more to increase the number of training days each month and speed up the time between applying to training to being awarded a licence. The consultation also revealed support for offering drivers the opportunity to work towards a transferable driving qualification, such as City & Guilds, RQF (Regulated Qualification Framework), or Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ), which can often be completed within a period of 6 to 10 days. The qualification would also need to be accompanied by modules on English and numeracy, local driver knowledge, and safeguarding.
- 2.3 Evidence from neighbouring authorities has also suggested that some applicants have applied to training and be licensed in other authorities, and then work in Leeds, citing the shorter training time in those authorities. The harmonisation work with the neighbouring authorities aims to improve consistency where it drives up safety and reduces risk.
- 2.4 Nationally, there has been a growth in applicants for some authorities whose requirements are perceived to be lower than other authorities, leading to an increase in cross border working, where drivers are trained and licensed in one area with lower requirements, but work predominantly or entirely in another district, with higher requirements.

3.0 Main issues

- 3.1 The main issues relate to the procurement method, and risks of failing to procure successfully.
- 3.2 It is extremely important that the procurement method extends training capacity, while also maintaining quality and standards. Following advice from the council's procurement team, the route of dynamic purchasing is believed to offer the best balance of improving capacity, by allowing new entrants meeting the requirement to provide training at any point over the four years of the contract.
- 3.3 Alongside the procurement, it is also essential that the council ensures that the current training provision is maintained up to the start of the new provision, to ensure that standards are met, and there is not significant delay in training. If the dynamic purchasing route were followed, there would be a procurement and implementation project of several months, as set out in **Appendix B**.

4.0 Corporate Considerations

- 4.0.1 The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to the following aims:

Best Council Plan 2013 -17

Towards being an Enterprising Council

Our Ambition and Approach

Our Ambition is for Leeds to be the best city and Leeds City Council to be the best council in the UK – fair, open and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful.

Our Approach is to adopt a new leadership style of civic enterprise, where the council becomes more enterprising, business and partners become more civic, and citizens become more actively engaged in the work of the city.

Our Best Council Outcomes

Make it easier for people to do business with us

Our Best Council Objectives

Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth – Improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses. With a focus on:

- Helping people into jobs,
- Boosting the local economy
- Generating income for the council

Ensuring high quality public services – improving quality, efficiency and involving people in shaping their city. With a focus on;

- Getting services right first time
- Improving customer satisfaction

- 4.0.2 Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to priorities:

- Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds
- Effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in communities

- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults:

4.0.3 Leeds City Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the duty of care for both children and vulnerable adults across all of its services. This cannot be achieved by any single service or agency. Safeguarding is ultimately the responsibility of all of us and depends on the everyday vigilance of staff, who play a part in the lives of children or vulnerable adults.

4.1 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.1.1 An equality, diversity and cohesion screening exercise will be undertaken. It is not considered that the content of this report or the recommendations made will have any impact on any specific group or individuals.

4.2 Council policies and City Priorities

4.2.1 The services provided under this report will contribute to the council's business plan through spending money wisely.

4.3 Resources and value for money

- 4.3.1 The contract is to be tendered to ensure best value is achieved for the authority and a dynamic purchasing framework set up for the provision of Taxi and Private Hire Driver Training for up to an initial 4 years.
- 4.3.2 The impact of outsourcing and consolidating the training will be the loss of a significant amount of income to Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, as the driver applicants will pay the new training providers directly. The change in training provision will be accompanied by a review of service development roles, with an aim to include a stronger contract management function instead of direct training provision.

4.4 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.4.1 A procedure will be set up for the control of documents and information relating to training.

4.5 Risk Management

- 4.5.1 The main risks to the authority are three fold:
- the risk of loss of training provision in the implementation of the new procurement – the council ends the contracts with existing providers before the new provision is ready;
 - failure to have sufficient new training available within the early implementation of the contract; and
 - loss of a training provider and failure to replace the provision during the period of the contract.
- 4.5.2 These risks will be addressed through the management of the implementation of the procurement and the management of the existing contracts.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The report provides Chair of Licensing Committee and Committee members with information on the procurement process.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Licensing Committee is recommended to note the approval of a procurement exercise and timetable for a dynamic purchasing provision of Taxi and Private Hire Driver Training for up to an initial 4 years.

Appendix A List of Driver Training Courses

Course title	Provider	Cost
Customer Care	Provided by LCC Fleet Services	£55 (to LCC)
Driving Standards Assessment	Provided by a choice of 3 local providers: Diamond Advanced Motorists AA DriveTech IAM RoadSmart	£78 £86.40
Hackney Carriage (Taxi) Knowledge	Provided by LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing	£50 (to LCC)
Literacy & Numeracy	Provided by LearnDirect	£25
Private Hire Driver Seminar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic legislation • Leeds knowledge and Leeds city centre knowledge • Private Hire conditions • Using a reference tool (AZ) 	Provided by LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing	£90 (to LCC)
Safeguarding	Provided by Carolyn Eyre, Safeguarding Consultant	£10

Appendix B Possible Timetable

FRAMEWORK FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER TRAINING

OJEU Open Procedure

Activity	Timescales
Seek Approval to Procure from Chief Officer	20.11.17
Procurement planning documentation	By 30.11.2017
First draft of Tender documents Parts 1 and 2 and appendices 1(a) and 1(b). Draft PQQ.	By 13.12.2017
Share draft documents with other LAs	13.12.2017 to 3.1.2018
Revise and refine tender documents following consultation	10.01.2019
Draft contract terms and conditions (Part 3)	W/c 13.01.2018
Share T & Cs and consult with other LAs	30.01.2018
Finalise tender docs and establish evaluation criteria/methodology & seek approval from CO/Director	22.02.2018
Publish tender documents on Yortender	w/c 1.03.2018
Tender period	8.03.2018 to 7.04.2018
Deadline for receipt of tenders	7.04.2018
Tenders downloaded and verified and passed on for evaluation	8.04.2018
Evaluation of tenderers' Quality Criteria/method statements	W/c 12.04.2018
Price evaluation	
Interviews and presentations	W/c 5.05.2018
Finalise tender evaluation and identify preferred bidder	By 6.05.2018

Activity	Timescales
Vetting of preferred bidders' PQQs	30.05.2018
Prepare award report	W/c 2.06.2018
Draft Agreement and check all paperwork	2.06.2018 to 27.06.2018
Send Alcatel letter to successful bidder and notify unsuccessful ones	W/c 30.06.2018
Alcatel period	1.06.2018 to 10.06.2018
Get approval to award contract (DDN) and publish decision and complete Award memo	By 11.06.2018
Confirm award and publish OJEU Award Notice	W/c 16.06.2018
Lessons learnt	30.06.2018
Draft Contract Management Plan	
New service commences	1.07.2018