

**From: Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform**

**Mr Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services**

**To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee 1 July 2016**

**Subject: Procurement of SEN Transport provision – Phase 2**

**Key decision:** Expenditure or savings of > £1m – including if over several phases. Procurement across all of Phase 2 is expected to exceed £10m (existing cost of servicing Phase 2 schools is approximately £17.4m).

**Classification: Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet Member for Decision

**Summary:** The SEN Transport project has focused on improving the quality and experience of learners accessing Special schools whilst reducing the transport costs to the local authority. This report seeks Cabinet Committee endorsement for the Cabinet Member's decision for the award of contracts for the provision of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport into Special schools following the implementation of Phase 1. The decision will encompass both the award for the initial contract term of three years, and if required for any of the two potential extensions that may be invoked.

Members are advised that there will be no changes to transport policy or the entitlement of individual students as a result to endorsing this approach to procurement.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse the decision for the award of contracts for SEN Transport Provision in following completion of the procurement process for the provision of SEN Transport provision. This will be on a bulk procurement basis (single school lots) or multiple routes, based upon the geographical spread of students for each school.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 KCC provides home to school transport for students with special educational needs (SEN). In 2015/16 the Council spent circa £20m on the provision of such transport, transporting 4000 or more students to over 100 establishments, through the letting of over 1300 contracts.
- 1.2 SEN Transport was selected as one of the Phase 2 reviews of the Facing The Challenge Transformation programme. In April 2015, a project was set up to test the outcome of the Facing the Challenge review, by implementing a new procurement strategy across a small number of Special schools. This was successfully implemented in April 2016, and this new Phase seeks to continue to roll out the new procurement strategy across our Special school network.
- 1.3 There is no intention to review transport policy or pupil eligibility assessments as current policy reflects best practice nationally.

## **2. Body of the report**

- 2.1 SEN Transport is currently procured on a route by route basis, with the Eligibility team within EYPS (Fair Access) passing on to Public Transport the requirement for SEN pupil transport.
- 2.2 This procurement supports the existing SEN Transport Policy. There is no change to any policy or eligibility criteria.
- 2.3 Route optimisation is assessed by the Transport Planning team on a four year cycle (based on current route procurement). By using GIS and working alongside the schools to ensure pupils' needs continue to be met, new routes will be identified which reduce vehicle numbers whilst maintaining (or reducing where possible) journey times. It is important to note that route optimisation outputs are endorsed by the school, to ensure that children's needs continue to be met.
- 2.4 The new procurement may continue to be based on a route by route basis, depending on the geographical spread of students. Where possible, KCC will implement bulk procurement, but procure on a whole school network basis. This continues the implementation of a step change in the delivery of SEN Transport and the Council is seeking to continue to work with the market to ensure we deliver improved service standard and improve value for money.
- 2.5 The project is seeking to achieve multiple benefits including potential financial savings for the local authority, as well as improvements to service delivery and consistency for both schools and families by providing a single or fewer accountable transport providers per school.
- 2.6 Contractual compliance will still be critical to any award, and Public Transport will continue to monitor compliance during the life of the contract.
- 2.7 This procurement includes a series of market briefings and engagement to support local Kent business in continuing to engage our SEN Transport

provision. Phase 1 schools were both awarded to Kent businesses.

- 2.8 The schools in scope for Phase 2 are Special schools. It is recognised that communication to parents and the schools is critical in the success of this project.
- 2.9 The Headteachers at the schools in scope will be engaged at the appropriate time (roll out over 2 years). Public Transport will work closely with the schools to ensure that route optimisation work takes into account the needs of their pupils, and all will be asked to endorse any changes made, to ensure that they are clear and supportive of changes made to individual routes.
- 2.10 The team will also offer to attend parents evenings to support the project. This approach has worked very well during Phase 1, with both the schools and the parents, utilising the availability of Public Transport Staff to discuss any concerns or issues. Not only has this approach been useful to support the project aims and objectives, but has given KCC the opportunity to listen to schools and parents on other transport related matters. It will also allow KCC to ensure parents are aware of other options available to them e.g. Personal Transport Budgets.
- 2.11 The mobilisation period will be planned and will ensure that new operators are given the opportunity to meet with schools and parents. The mobilisation plan will be worked up jointly with the schools to ensure a joined up approach to managing the contractor.
- 2.12 New contract awards will start from September 2016, with new awards taking place over the following 2 years. All contracts will be initiated at the start of a school term. The initial contract awards will begin in September 2016. To allow these awards to be made before the end of the previous term (July 2016), allowing mobilisation activities to take place with the schools and parents, the decision must be taken immediately after the cabinet committee meeting.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The proposed contract spend across Phase 2 schools will be in excess of £10million. The current cost of SEN Transport provision into the proposed schools is £17.4million. New contracts will be awarded on a three year basis, with a two year extension period.
- 3.2 Phase 1 procurement changes introduced a saving of approximately 10%.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 A transparent and accountable procurement process will be used to select the providers. Legal will be engaged alongside the procurement team to support the contract award.

## **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 Please refer to the EQIA initial assessment.
- 5.2 There is no change to any policy or eligibility criteria.

## **6. Other corporate implications**

- 6.1 This procurement has implications on both EYPS in terms of any financial impact it may have, and Growth, Environment & Transport in terms of service delivery.

## **7. Governance**

- 7.1 The Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services will be the delegated officer under the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 A robust procurement process is being undertaken to identify providers for a single provider school contract for SEN Transport provision. There is potential to secure financial savings through new contract and ensure that the needs of vulnerable children continue to be met by the local authority.

## **9. Recommendation(s):**

- 9.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse the decision for the award of contracts for SEN Transport Provision in following completion of the procurement process for the provision of SEN Transport provision. This will be on a bulk procurement basis (single school lots) or multiple routes, based upon the geographical spread of students for each school.

## **10. Background Documents**

- 10.1 FED list submission

## **11. Appendix**

Appendix 1 - EqIA

## **12. Contact details**

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# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

Mr Roger Gough

Cabinet Member – Education and Health Reform

**DECISION NO:**

16/00056

**For publication****Key decision****As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:**

Endorse the award of contracts for SEN Transport Provision following completion of the the procurement process on either a multiple route basis, or single school bulk procurement depending on geographical spread of children.

**Reason for decision:**

Following the implementation of SEN Transport Phase 1, where transport was procured on a bulk single school basis, this report seeks Cabinet Committee endorsement for awarding of contracts across the remaining SEN School network, following a competitive tender process and in accordance with chosen evaluation methodology stated in published Invitation To Tender. The decision will encompass both the award for the initial contract term of three years, and if required for any of the two potential extensions that may be invoked.

Members are advised that there will be no changes to transport policy or the entitlement of individual students as a result to endorsing this approach to procurement.

**Financial Implications**

The proposed contract spend across Phase 2 schools will be in excess of £10million. The current cost of SEN Transport provision into the proposed schools is £17.4million. New contracts will be awarded on a three year basis, with a two year extension period.

**Legal implications**

A transparent and accountable procurement process will be used to select the providers. Legal will be engaged alongside the procurement team to support the contract award.

**Equalities implications**

Please refer to the EQIA initial assessment. There is no change to any policy or eligibility criteria.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

That the Cabinet Committee endorses the award of contracts for the provision of SEN Transport into all Special schools following a competitive tender process, on a single school, single lot strategy or multiple route basis where appropriate.

**Cabinet Committee 1<sup>st</sup> July:** To be added following meeting

**Any alternatives considered:**

A robust procurement process is being undertaken to identify providers for SEN Transport provision. There is potential to secure financial savings through the new contract and ensure that the needs of vulnerable children continue to be met by the local authority.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None**

This procurement has implications on both EYPS in terms of any financial impact it may have, and Growth, Environment & Transport in terms of service delivery.

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signed

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date