



Doncaster Council

Transport for Education and Social Services Related Contract Report

Date: 10th August 2022

To the Chair and Members of the Cabinet

CREATION OF A DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM CONTRACT FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES RELATED TRANSPORT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Lani-Mae Ball	All Wards	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide background and obtain approval for a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for the provision of Education and Social Services related transport and travel assistance. There will not be any additional costs in implementing this new DPS contract, as it will replace the existing one, which is approaching the end of the contract period. It is also to gain approval to utilise the transport budget to pay for the transport costs arising from this contract. The provision of travel assistance is a contributing factor to the Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and Doncaster Delivering Together to enable all children and young people to achieve their full potential.
2. The primary responsibility for ensuring pupils and students attend school or college is always that of the parent or carer. In certain circumstances however, in order to ensure attendance, Doncaster Council can assist with travel arrangements.
3. Travel Assistance is provided by a mixture of both an internal fleet at some schools and externally contracted taxis and minibuses. This contract relates to the procurement of external service only and not the internal fleet. Better value options for home to school transport will continue to be explored and a feasibility study will be undertaken in relation to growing the internal fleet. The creation of this contract will not impact on or delay decisions in respect of increasing the internal fleet.
4. The current DPS contract was originally created in 2017 for a period of 4 years with the option to extend for a further 3 years on an annual basis. Due to the Covid Pandemic, the decision was taken in early 2021 to extend the contract for one year to end in November 2022. This paper relates to the

procurement of the new contract to enable the dynamic purchasing of external providers to provide home to school transport routes.

Why is it a key decision?

5. The proposal to create and implement a new DPS contract and spend the transport budget will have an impact on communities across all Doncaster Wards. This contract will ensure that we can continue to fulfil our statutory duty to provide travel assistance to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Doncaster.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. This report is not exempt

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Cabinet Members are asked to:-
 - Note the contents of this report
 - Approve the creation and implementation of a new DPS Contract and permit the award routes from the DPS Contract during its term
 - Approve the use of the transport budget to meet costs incurred under this contract

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. The creation and implementation of a new DPS contract means that we can continue to meet our obligations to provide travel assistance to eligible families, which includes some of the most vulnerable families in Doncaster. By continuing to provide this assistance, pupils and students arrive in school in a timely manner ready for the school day, which aids the development of essential life skills
9. This will incur expenditure as routes awarded to taxi and minibus firms will need to be paid for. However, this will ensure that pupils and students are able to access education who may otherwise have not been able to do so.

BACKGROUND

10. The provision of home to school transport for certain categories of eligible children is a statutory duty of the Council. Due to the nature of their needs, not all children are able to walk to school or to travel on public transport. Therefore, the Council has a duty to seek suitable alternative provision. Additionally, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) often attend schools which are some distance from their homes if that is the school which can best meet their needs and this often means transport across Doncaster or even outside of the borough
11. This alternative provision can take many forms and our aim is to provide as many pupils and students as possible with the skills to travel between home and school/college independently either walking or via public transport. Additionally we provide bus passes, mileage allowances or personal budgets to enable families to make their own arrangements where this is an

option. For those pupils who need additional support there is transport in the form of a taxi or minibus, which picks the child up from their home area and takes them directly to the school they attend. These taxis and minibuses must be procured in accordance with procurement regulations and a contract has to be in place between the firms undertaking the transport and the Council to ensure that everyone is aware of the terms and conditions of the work offered and undertaken. This includes ensuring that all licenses and permits meet any applicable licensing environmental standards. This is included in the current DPS contract, which is due to come to an end shortly and will also be included in the new DPS contract.

12. The total transport budget for 2022/2023 is £5,819,270 in 2021/2022 it was £5,408,890 and total expenditure was £5,739,284. The population in Doncaster continues to rise and this has meant an increase in the number of pupils and students with complex needs. Therefore has been rapid growth in the number of requests received for home to school and college travel assistance to be provided by Doncaster Council. These requests are reviewed on an individual basis to ensure that transport is only provided where necessary but this growth is expected to continue which will mean a further increase in expenditure. A new contract may generate renewed interest amongst taxi and minibus firms and increase competition for this work. There is no additional cost to the Council of implementing a new DPS contract; this will just replace the existing contract.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

13. Option 1: Do nothing. This will mean that the existing contract will cease in November 2022 and we will no longer be able to perform our statutory duty to provide transport where necessary, as we will no longer have a Framework from which to tender for transport routes or offer work to contractors.
14. Option 2: Extend the existing contract for a further year. This is permissible under the terms of the current contract but is only delaying the inevitable, as a new contract will have to be put into place at some point.
15. Option 3: Consider increasing the Council's internal fleet to deliver more Home to School Transport. This option has been considered however, due to the long lead in time to obtain minibuses and recruit staff this would not be viable before the expiry of the current contract leading to pupils not being able to travel to school and the failure of our statutory duty. Additionally the electric minibuses currently on the market would not be fit for purpose for this type of usage. Some routes would still require taxi transport as only one or two pupils travel and therefore a contract would always be required for a proportion of the transport operated. This option does require further consideration in the future including plans for a gradual increase in the internal fleet once suitable vehicles are available. The notice clause in the contract means that we would be able to move to this option with relative ease in the future once it has received full consideration and approval
16. Option 4: Approve the creation and implementation of a new DPS contract and the use of the transport budget to fund transport to schools and colleges under this contract whilst continuing to explore more cost effective and sustainable options.
This is the recommended option

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

17. The creation of a new DPS contract will enable the Council to continue to meet its statutory duty to provide transport and travel assistance to children and young people across the Borough. This must be paid for and the transport budget is there for this purpose

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

18.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>The creation of a new contract enabling us to continue transporting children and young people will contribute towards these outcomes</p>

	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>The creation of a new contract enabling us to continue transporting children and young people will contribute towards these outcomes</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

19. With the increased cost of living and fuel price increases, it is likely that the transport budget will not cover the full costs of home to school transport. This was the case in 2021/22 and is a trend, which is likely to continue. A new contract with the potential for increased competition amongst operators will help to improve competition and make prices more competitive.
20. Following the recent pandemic there is a shortage of bus drivers and many taxi drivers have also sought alternative, more stable employment. This, together with the increase in requests for transport and travel assistance, means that some firms are approaching capacity in terms of the work they are able to undertake for us. The advertisement and launch of a new contract may renew interest in this type of work and attract new suppliers to the contract.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: NJD Date: 03/05/2022]

21. The Council has a statutory duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary to secure suitable home to school transport is made for eligible children in accordance with Section 508B of the Education Act 1996.
22. Section 508C of the Education Act 1996 gives the Council the discretion to make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary who are

not eligible children for the purposes of section 508B of the Education Act 1996.

23. Regulation 34 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 permits the Council to set up and use a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for commonly used purchases the characteristics of which, as generally available on the market, meet their requirements.
24. The procurement of the DPS must be carried out in compliance with the Council contract procedure rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
25. Legal should be consulted to prepare the required legal documentation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: LS Date: 29/04/22]

26. There are no additional costs to the Council from the proposal for a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for the provision of Education and Social Services related transport and travel assistance.
27. The net transport budget for 2022/23 is £5,819,270. In 2021/22 the net budget was £5,408,890 and net expenditure was £5,739,284, an overspend of £330,394.
28. Previously when a new DPS contract has been implemented this has led to increased competition from firms, as they will be bidding for work against each other, which in turn drove prices down. The last time a new DPS contract was implemented, the same routes were £185k less in price. However in the current climate of increasing demand for travel assistance and high fuel costs, there is a risk that this would not be the case as the significant increase in the number of transport runs needed means there is more routes to bid for meaning less competition, and firms will charge higher prices due to the increased cost of fuel.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: JC Date: 05/05/2022]

29. There are no direct HR imps associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: PW Date: 27/04/22]

30. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: CW Date: 29/04/22]

31. Learning outcomes and health outcomes are intrinsically linked. Evidence shows that education, training and employment are key socio-economic factors in determining health status (Marmot, 2010). Pupils requiring specialist education provision have vulnerabilities that can often place them at a disadvantage with both educational and health outcomes. Programmes that aim to improve accessibility and attendance to education, and reduce the gap in educational attainment are likely to impact positively on reducing long-term health inequalities in Doncaster.
32. The programme described in the report aims to support attendance and reducing the gap in educational attainment for some of Doncaster's most

vulnerable children, the programme is likely to impact positively in reducing long-term health inequalities in Doncaster.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: KH Date: 12/04/2022]

33. The Council's duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when exercising its functions is to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic, ensure fair access to learning for all Doncaster children and young people.
34. Due regard will be given to relevant and proportionate consideration of the duty, in that whenever significant decisions are being made, consideration must (and will) be given to the impact/affect that implementing a particular policy or decision will have in relation to equality before making that decision.
35. A new contract will enable us to continue to meet our duty to transport children to school in the most suitable and effective way to meet their individual needs
36. There are no concerns around equality implications at the time of writing this report

CONSULTATION

37. Whilst no formal consultation has taken place with regards to the implementation of a new contract a Stakeholder Engagement session is planned to seek the views of contractors on the proposed contract.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

38. None

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

39. None

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