

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 October 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Local Bus Contract Tenders

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To notify the Executive Board that the current Local Bus Contract Framework is due to come to an end in March 2017 and that, as a consequence, a new framework be procured to cover the period April 2017 to March 2019, with an option to extend the period by a further two years. This is a report for information purposes, to comply with Procurement Standing Order Part 2.1 due to the accumulative value of the contracts projected to be in excess of £1 million.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- 1) acknowledge the Local Bus Framework and support the requirement to procure a new framework; and**
- 2) support the tendering of local supported bus contracts.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council's Transport Co-ordination Team is responsible for procuring supported local bus services. These services are non-profitable in nature, due to the generally lower level of passengers they attract. They tend not to be provided on a commercial basis by local bus operators because of the low levels of fares they generate and the high cost per passenger journey. The Council's local (Supported) Bus Services revenue budget provides support for what have, historically, been deemed socially necessary bus services. These are services where there is evidenced passenger demand for employment, educational, medical and/or leisure/social related journeys. The provision of these services has to be contracted out for a period of one to four years to external transport providers.

3.2 The Local Bus Framework is a mechanism that allows the Council to identify public transport operators who are capable of delivering local bus transport contracts on its behalf and to the standard identified in the

current conditions of contract. The Framework provides a platform to advertise long-term or short-term contracts over a reduced advertising period as all the qualifying requirements have previously been met by the operators.

- 3.3 To become part of the Framework, providers are required to demonstrate their capabilities of delivering contracts by completing a Pre- Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ), which contains a series of quality, financial and experienced based questions relating to the contract requirements.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the supported local bus network currently provides for in excess of 370,000 passengers journeys across the Borough.
- 3.5 There are currently 24 local bus contracts in operation in the Borough providing access to employment areas, health facilities, education and training facilities. These contracts are tendered through the Local Bus Framework as and when required.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual budget to provide the local bus services currently stands at £495,000.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

It is widely recognised that good quality and affordable public transport services can help to improve access to key facilities for children and young people within the Borough.

- 7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The supported local bus network provides a wide range of accessible public transport services within the Borough aimed at improving access to key employment, learning and training facilities.

7.3 Healthy Halton

Many of the public transport contracts tendered, provide essential access to a wide range of key facilities across the Borough and to out-of-borough establishments. Therefore, public transport directly helps to assist and ensure that the public in general, live a healthy and active lifestyle.

7.4 A Safer Halton

Public transport services are provided to enable passengers to undertake a variety of journeys in a safe and non-intimidating environment. It also enables all passengers to access facilities in a safe manner, ensuring that they are socially included.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Provision of public transport services is widely acknowledged as playing a key role in sustainable regeneration and urban renewal. It also allows for existing residents to access key areas within the Borough and cross-boundary to neighbouring authorities.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Funding reductions will pose a risk to the public transport network services supported by the Council.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 None for the purposes of the Act