

## Briefing notes on Issues included in the Forward Plan Issue 2004/05

### SERVICE AREA: Education, Arts & Libraries

Report ref	Report title
	<p data-bbox="480 371 1007 405"><b>Award of Primary School Meals Contract</b></p> <p data-bbox="480 434 1294 468">This report has been withdrawn as there were no complaint tenders.</p>
<p data-bbox="237 528 368 562"><b>Summary:</b></p> <p data-bbox="237 562 1358 770">The tendering process for a new school meals contract for Brent primary and special schools was unsuccessful as the Council received no compliant tenders. The Council received one tender which was non-compliant as the tender did not include a Form of Tender, it was qualified and did not meet the specific requirements as set out in the Instructions to Tender. Feedback from the companies on some of their reasons for not tendering was the condition of some of the kitchen equipment, the differential pay rates within the workforce, and the competitive tender process.</p> <p data-bbox="237 801 1358 1167">Since 1999 the responsibility for the provision of schools meals has been with individual schools. However Council officers were asked to facilitate a group contract on behalf of some of Brent's primary schools. In order to package the contract in a way that would be deliverable by the market and would achieve maximum market interest, consultation was undertaken with market leaders. In October 2003 the Council advertised for organisations interested in participating in the Council's consultation prior to tendering for this contract. Six companies responded to this advert and attended a half day meeting with Officers on the proposed service arrangements for the new contract. Officers discussed the proposed arrangements with the companies and made some amendments to the packaging for the contract based on these discussions. As a result of this consultation, an output based specification was produced which allowed the tenderers to be imaginative, innovative and was not prescriptive in how they packaged the service.</p> <p data-bbox="237 1198 1358 1384">The Council advertised on 18/12/03 for companies interested in providing the school meals service. Ten companies expressed an interest in the contract and were sent the Council's Standard Pre Qualification Questionnaire which addresses the Council's requirements in terms of financial standing, Health &amp; Safety, Quality Assurance, technical capacity and technical expertise. Following evaluation of the responses to the Pre Qualification Questionnaire, five companies were invited to tender for the contract.</p> <p data-bbox="237 1415 1358 1688">Following the result of the tendering process, discussions were held with a steering group of headteachers and several meetings were held with all schools to discuss the options available to them. One option was to renegotiate with the current provider and look to retender for April 2005. Unfortunately, the current contractor wanted to increase the price to schools by at least 11p per meal for an extension to the current contract - this being dependent on the number of schools agreeing to remain in the group contract. Given a level of dissatisfaction with the current contractor it was not an attractive proposal and many schools decided that they would seek their own provision, thus making the renewal option unrealistic and unaffordable.</p> <p data-bbox="237 1720 1358 1778">Subsequently, the LEA has been working with the schools to facilitate suitable school meals provision for September 2004. In a number of cases this has already been successful.</p>	
<p data-bbox="237 1872 871 1906"><b>Nature of Decision to be taken/Intended Outcome</b></p> <p data-bbox="237 1935 488 1968">No decision required</p>	

**Timescale for decision:**

N/A

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