

	<b>Officer Key Decision</b>
	<b>Report to the Corporate Director of Children and Young People</b>
<b>AUTHORITY TO TENDER CONTRACT FOR AN INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING SERVICE</b>	

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key Decision
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers (not included):</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Richard Murphy Head of Transport Operations <a href="mailto:richard.murphy@brent.gov.uk">richard.murphy@brent.gov.uk</a>  Michelle Gwyther Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnership <a href="mailto:michelle.gwyther@brent.gov.uk">michelle.gwyther@brent.gov.uk</a>

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the procurement of an Independent Travel Training (ITT) service for young people (CYP) in Brent with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Independent Travel Training is a service which has been included in the revised Travel Assistance Policy July 2024. The ITT service would provide individualised training to CYP with SEND to enable them to travel actively and independently, like their non-SEND peers. This is not a service the Council currently offers and is seen as an important step in increasing independence and improving opportunities for our CYP with SEND, as well as helping to reduce demand on the Harrow and Brent Special Needs Transport Service. This report requests approval to invite tenders in respect of an Independent Travel Training service as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89.

## 2.0 Recommendation(s)

The Corporate Director of Children and Young People:

- 2.1 Approves inviting tenders for the provision of an Independent Travel Training service on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.8 of the report.
- 2.2 Approves Officers evaluating the tenders referred to in 2.1 above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.8 section (vi) of the report.

### 3.0 Detail

#### **Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context**

- 3.1. The introduction of an Independent Travel Training (ITT) service in Brent will directly contribute to a number of strategic priorities and outcomes within the Borough Plan 2023-27. These are outlined as follows:

**Strategic Priority 2 - A Cleaner, Greener Future.** One of the desired outcomes is: Desired Outcome 3 Keeping Brent on the Move. The service will help deliver Brent's long term transport strategy and healthy streets programme to encourage more active travel, including walking and cycling in safe, inclusive, designed environments. Young people who receive Independent Travel Training will be able to become more active, independent and green travellers and help reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

**Strategic Priorities 4 - The Best Start in Life.** Desired Outcome 1 is about Raised Aspirations, Achievement and Attainment. Independent Travel Training will play an important part in equipping SEND young people with the skills they need to effectively prepare for independence which is a key element of the transition to adulthood. Being able to independently travel firstly to and from school, and then to college and / or work will be enabled by the learning of the essential skills ITT provides. Having these independence skills will also enable young people to play a more active role in their communities and have an active social life.

**Strategic Priority 5 is about building a healthier Brent.** One of the Desired Outcomes which will be achieved is Desired Outcome 1: Tackling Health Inequalities. As well as the increase in physical activity that comes from being an independent traveller there, the confidence gained from becoming an independent traveller will play a significant part of improving mental health and wellbeing for children and young people with SEND. <https://www.brent.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/strategies-priorities-and-policies>

#### **Background**

- 3.2 The Council requires the provision of an Independent Travel Training service for SEND young people. Officers have considered whether an Independent Travel Training service can be provided in-house, but owing to the lack of ITT capacity within the Council have concluded it is best provided by a contractor at this time.
- 3.3 The service would primarily take the form of delivering practical one-on-one training with young people with SEND who have been identified as having the potential to travel independently to school/college. This is not a service currently offered by Brent Council, though has been offered by Woodfield School to some previous students. It is an important part of the new approach to Travel Assistance taken by the Council

that encompasses the updated Travel Assistance policy approved by Cabinet on 17 June 2024.

- 3.4 As well as the benefits to the young people participating in ITT, the successful delivery of the service will reduce the number of young people dependant on home-to-school transport. The impact of the programme will help mitigate increasing spending on transport caused by an increase in service users requiring this type of travel assistance.
- 3.5 The commissioning of the ITT service, as part of the wider ‘Children and Young People aged 0-25 in Education Travel Assistance Policy Implementation Plan’, is anticipated to have a net return on investment of £630,504 at the end of the 2028/29 financial year. The return assumes that travel trained young people will be able to travel independently on a sustained basis and this will result in cost avoidance. The numbers of young people planned to be trained is 8 during the half year mobilisation period (4 in 24/25), 58 in year 1, 35 in year 2, and 23 in year 3 and 4.
- 3.6 The contract will be valued at £650,000 + VAT on a 4.5-year term on a 2.5+1+1 basis, valued at £50,000 in the first half year mobilisation period, £250,000 for year 1, £150,000 for year 2 and £100,000 for years 3 and 4 if extended. The higher figure in the first full year of the contract is to reflect a focused ‘pump-priming’ to achieving change in in the 2025/2026 financial year. The service will primarily be run remotely given the nature of the service and any office space required will be provided by the supplier.
- 3.7 As a new service involving young people in transit, there will be health and safety and safeguarding considerations, but the successful implementation of ITT services in other Local Authorities show these are manageable. Safety and safeguarding will be built into the service specification and compliance monitored closely by the Contract Manager to ensure service are delivered in a safe manner.

### Pre-tender Considerations

- 3.8 In accordance with Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89, pre-tender considerations for the procurement of the contract for an Independent Travel Training Service (the “Contract”) have been set out below for the approval of the Corporate Director:

Ref.	Requirement	Response
(i)	The nature of the services / supplies / works.	Establishment and delivery of an Independent Travel Training Service.
(ii)	The estimated value.	Up to £650,000 ex. VAT
(iii)	The contract term.	4.5 years (on a 2.5+1+1 basis)

Ref.	Requirement	Response	
(iv)	The tender procedure to be adopted.	Single stage open tender	
v)	The procurement timetable.	<b>Indicative dates are:</b>	
		Adverts placed	01/10/2024
		Invite to tender	01/10/2024
		Deadline for tender submissions	01/11/2024
		Panel evaluation and moderation	04/11/2024 – 20/11/2024
		Contract award decision	21/11/2024
		Report recommending Contract award circulated internally for comment & approval by Corporate Director	Corporate Director decision 02/12/2024
		10 calendar day standstill period – notification issued to all tenderers and additional debriefing of unsuccessful tenderers	02/12/2024 – 12/12/2024
		Contract Mobilisation	13/12/2024
		Contract start date	01/01/2025
(vi)	The evaluation criteria and process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At selection stage shortlists are to be drawn up in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement and Management Guidelines by the use of a selection questionnaire to identify organisations meeting the Council's financial standing requirements, technical capacity and technical expertise.</li> <li>2. At tender evaluation stage, the panel will evaluate the tenders against the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price 30%</li> <li>• Quality 60%</li> <li>• Social Value 10%</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety compliance (pass/fail)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
(vii)	Any business risks associated with entering the contract.	No specific business risks are considered to be associated with entering into the proposed Contract.	
(viii)	The Council's Best Value duties.	An open tendering process will enable the Council to achieve best value for money.	

Ref.	Requirement	Response
(ix)	Consideration of Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	The Council is under duty pursuant to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (“the Social Value Act”) to consider how services being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area; how, in conducting the procurement process, the Council might act with a view to securing that improvement; and whether the Council should undertake consultation. Officers have had regard to considerations contained in the Social Value Act in relation to the procurement and social value forms 10% of the evaluation score.
(x)	Any staffing implications, including TUPE and pensions.	See section 9 in the report.
(xi)	The relevant financial, legal and other considerations.	See Financial Considerations at Sections 5 and Legal Considerations at Section 6 below.
(xii)	Sustainability	This has been assessed in line with the Procurement Sustainability Policy and determined that a quality measure for sustainability is not required and can be captured as part of the Social Value criteria.
(xiii)	Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes	Appropriate Key Performance Indicators / Outcomes will be included in the Contract.
(xiv)	London Living Wage	The Contract will require the payment of the London Living Wage.
(xv)	Contract Management	A contract manager will be appointed and appropriate contract management provisions will be included in the Contract.

#### 4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 In June 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) released new guidance in respect of travel to school for children of compulsory school age. This triggered a review of Brent Council’s Travel Assistance policy and in doing so the Council has also taken into account the DfE’s January 2019 statutory guidance for young people in post-16 education. In response to this new guidance, the Council drafted a new Travel Assistance policy, and this policy went through formal consultation with residents between 4 March 2024 and 14 April 2024.
- 4.2 The consultation period consisted of 4 online drop-in sessions, 4 in-person drop-in sessions, an online survey hosted on Brent’s Community Engagement Hub, focus groups with the Brent Parent-Carer Forum, and consultation sessions at two special schools. Parents, carers and young people were informed about the consultation period through social media, online flyers, letters, emails, and SMS. There were over 40 attendees at the drop-in sessions, 30 children and young people engaged, and 25 survey responses were received.

- 4.3 Almost all consultation attendees agreed with the idea for an Independent Travel Training programme (ITT), especially in conjunction with developing better access to community spaces for young people with SEND. This is also reflected in the survey feedback, with 80% of respondents fully or somewhat agreeing with the Council's approach to promote independence through the development of an Independent Travel Training Programme.
- 4.4 The main caveat to positive sentiments around ITT was anxiety around expectations of independence for all young people. Parents were concerned ITT would not be suitable for all young people, and assurance was provided by acknowledging that not all young people would be in a position to partake in the training programme. There was a significant amount of feedback related to parents wanting to see the programme, and how this information might be best delivered to young people. Many parents and carers were keen to be involved in the ITT programme to continue supporting their child's learning after the end of the training.
- 4.5 Consultation sessions were undertaken with young people at Woodfield School and The Village School. The young people were enthusiastic about independent travel, and they were keen to learn how to overcome disruptions or unexpected events during journeys. As part of the consultation process, young people said that they want to progress from school to college and then from college to university. Parents have also said that 'being healthy' is an important aspect of young people's futures.

## **5.0 Financial Considerations**

- 5.1 The estimated value of this Contract is £650,000 excluding VAT.
- 5.2 The cost of the Contract will be funded from £475,000 from Invest to Save approved by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and a £175,000 contribution from Public Health over the length of the contract equating to £35,000 per annum.
- 5.3 The investment is expected to produce net savings of £630K by the end of 2028/29. This is predicated on the assumption that enough young people are trained in independent travel, therefore avoiding the need for higher cost travel support. It is also assumed the overall numbers of clients remain at similar levels or have modest growth. Any delays in the implementation of the contract would likely result in slippage of the expected savings.
- 5.4 Key to the delivery of the savings will be the monitoring of the contract (especially during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of operation) and tracking the number of clients that travel independently against the overall client base.

## **6.0 Legal Considerations**

- 6.1 The services that Officers are proposing to procure fall under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015"). The estimated value of the proposed Contract during its lifetime would be at £650,000 excluding VAT and is therefore above the threshold for Schedule 3 Services under the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 (the "PCR 2015") and the procurement is therefore governed by the Light Touch Regime under the PCR 2015.
- 6.2 The procurement is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in respect of Medium Value Contracts given the procurement is valued at

£650,000 excluding VAT. For Medium Value Contracts, the Corporate Director must approve the pre-tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.8 above (Contract Standing Order 89) and the inviting of tenders (Contract Standing Order 88).

- 6.3 Once the tendering process is undertaken, Officers will report back to the Corporate Director in accordance with Contract Standing Orders, explaining the process undertaken in tendering the Contract and recommending award.
- 6.4 The Council will observe a voluntary 10 calendar day standstill period before the Contract can be awarded. This will include notifying all tenderers in writing of the Council's decision to award and providing additional debrief information to unsuccessful tenderers on receipt of a written request. The standstill period provides unsuccessful tenderers with an opportunity to challenge the Council's award decision if such challenge is justifiable. However, if no challenge or successful challenge is brought during the period, at the end of the standstill period the Council will issue a letter of acceptance to the successful tenderer and the Contract may commence.
- 6.5 Officers have set out in section 9.1 that the proposed services will be provided by external contractors. As such, the proposed procurement process is unlikely to have a direct impact on Council staff. There is unlikely to be TUPE implications as there are no similar services being provided to the Council. Please see section 9 for further information.
- 6.6 As the decision that is being sought here is a Key Decision, the decision is subject to a 5 clear day call-in period and Brent will undertake standstill period concurrently. The decision to award may not be implemented until after expiry of the call-in period provided that no call in has been made.
- 6.7 As the decision that is being sought here is a Key Decision, the decision may not be taken by the Corporate Director unless this matter has been published on the Forward Plan. The Key Decision must be published on the Forward Plan (Paragraph 30 of the Access to information rules) and must be included on the Forward Plan not less than 28 days before the decision is to be made. (Paragraph 34 of the Access to Information Rules). The decision in relation to this report will then be published which will commence a 5-day call-in period before the decision can be implemented.

## **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the "Public Sector Equality Duty"), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

- 7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.
- 7.5 The impacts of an ITT programme were considered as part of the Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken for the new Travel Assistance policy. Therefore, the proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 The procurement of an Independent Travel Training provider will have a positive impact on the Council's environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy. It will enable young people currently being transported by the Council to either walk or take public transport to school/college, removing vehicles from Brent roads.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 This service is not currently provided by the Council, as such there are no implications for Council staff arising from tendering the Contract.
- 9.2 There are no property considerations as the service will be delivered in the field and from the providers premises.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 As outlined in section 4 there was significant positive support for an Independent Travel Training service from young people and parents, but there was concern around the idea of it being seen as appropriate for everyone. Communications will be planned carefully to tap into the enthusiasm shown while making clear that participation in ITT is an individual decision for parents and young people to make.
- 10.2 To ensure the programme delivers cashable saving to the Council communication will need to ensure any families considering ITT are fully aware the expected result of successful training is sustained independent travel and there is no requirement for future home to school transport assistance.
- 10.3 The Council needs to be mindful of the need to manage expectations as to the capacity and speed of the programme. There is likely to be high demand for places on the ITT programme and a wait to start the training. Planning for the mobilisation of the programme will include mitigations to address this, which could include but not be



limited to, identifying and working first with those young people most likely to achieve independent travel the quickest.

- 10.4 While the emphasis will be on the provider to generate a pipeline of suitable candidates for training, the Council will have a key role in supporting this through existing communications channels, especially during the development and beginning of the service. This will commence with an Independent Travel Training stand at the Branching Out event in October. Information will be included in SEND newsletters and the Brent Parent Carer forum will be another way to promote the service.
- 10.5 There will also be an ongoing need for communications with professionals who will be able to make referrals to the service both within and outside of the Council. This will need to include a strong partnership with schools where young people currently are travelling by bus to allay concerns about young people not able to attend school.

**Related Documents:**

Business Case: Children and Young People aged 0-25 in Education Travel Assistance Policy Implementation Plan July 2024

London Borough of Brent Travel Assistance Policy for Children and Young People Aged 0-25 in Education July 2024

I approve the recommendations as set out in Section 2 above.

Print Name: **Nigel Chapman**  
Position: Corporate Director Children and Young People  
Date: 03/10/2024