

	Officer Key Decision
	Report to the Corporate Director of Childrens and Young People
	Lead Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
Authority to Award the Contract for an Independent Travel Training Service	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Part Exempt – Appendix 1 and 4 are exempt as they contain the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)”
No. of Appendices:	4 Appendix 1 – List of Bidders (exempt) Appendix 2 – Evaluation Grid Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment Appendix 4 – Social Value Commitments (exempt)
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the award of a contract for an Independent Travel Training (ITT) service for young people in Brent with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This report requests authority to award contracts as required by Contract Standing Order 88. This report summarises the process undertaken in procuring a contract and, following the completion of the evaluation of the bids, recommends to whom the contract should be awarded.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Corporate Director of Children and Young people in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools:

- 2.1 Approves the award of the contract for an Independent Travel Training (ITT) service to Kingston Centre for Independent Living for a period of two and a half (2.5) years with an option to extend for yearly periods up to a maximum of two (2) years with a contract value of up to £637,758.99 ex. VAT.

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 Following the agreement of a new Travel Assistance Policy for Children and Young People of Statutory School Age in the summer of 2024, the Council requires the provision of an Independent Travel Training service as part of its new Travel Assistance offer. Council officers have undertaken a procurement exercise and identified a contractor providing the most economically advantageous offer in accordance with the relevant evaluation criteria and therefore recommend award of a contract for the delivery of an Independent Travel Training service (the "Contract").

The Procurement Process

- 3.3 The Contract will be let using the Council's standard terms and conditions for a period of two and a half (2.5) years with an option to extend for yearly periods up to a maximum of two (2) years on a 2.5+1+1 basis.
- 3.4 A period of soft-market testing was undertaken to scope potential bidders and discuss the opportunity before advertisements were placed on the London Tenders Portal on 15 October 2024. Contractors were provided with an outline specification and details of the tender approach and were invited to complete a selection questionnaire using the Council's Electronic Tendering Facility.
- 3.5 Shortlisting was carried out on the basis of the contractors' financial viability, technical ability and previous experience.
- 3.6 The tendering instructions stated that the Contract would be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer to the Council and that in evaluating tenders, the Council would have regard to the following:

Criteria	Weighting
Service Delivery	15%
Quality Management	10%
Partnership Working	10%
Staffing	10%
Mobilisation	10%
Diversity/Equality	5%
Social Value	10%
Price	30%
Total	100%

- 3.7 Tenderers were required to submit additional information providing details of their proposed arrangements for performing the Contract including (but not limited to) the following:
- Confirmation of enhanced DBS checks for staff;
 - Confirmation of Safeguarding Policy;
 - Confirmation of Safer Recruitment Policy;
 - Confirmation of Equality and/or Diversity Policy;
 - Confirmation of Incident Reporting Policy;
 - Confirmation of Health and Safety Policy;
 - Confirmation of Complaints Procedure Policy;
 - Confirmation of Data Protection Policy.

Evaluation process

- 3.8 All tenders had to be submitted electronically no later than 13 November 2024 at 1pm. Tenders were opened on 13 November 2024 and three valid tenders were received.
- 3.9 The tender evaluation was carried out by a panel of officers from Brent Transport Services, Inclusion Service and School Admissions. Each member of the evaluation panel read the tenders and carried out an initial evaluation of how well they considered each of the award criteria was addressed in the tender.

- 3.10 Five parent / carer representatives from the Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) provided feedback on two quality questions of particular relevance to parents and carers. The subjects pertained to the assessment of candidates for ITT, the development of individualised plans, feedback to candidates and families, and engagement with parents/carers as a key stakeholder group. The panel considered this feedback as part of their scoring of the corresponding quality questions.
- 3.11 The panel met between 26 November 2024 - 2 December 2024 and each submission was marked by the whole panel against the award criteria.
- 3.12 The names of the tenderers are contained in Appendix 1. The scores received by the tenderers are included in Appendix 2. It will be noted that Contractor 3 was the highest scoring tenderer. Officers therefore recommend the award of the Contract to Contractor 3 namely Kingston Centre for Independent Living.
- 3.13 The Contract will commence on 1 January 2025 subject to the Council's observation of the requirements of the voluntary standstill period noted in paragraph 6.3 below.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 A full consultation process was undertaken during the development of the new Travel Assistance Policy during the summer of 2024, where the introduction of an Independent Travel Training service was strongly supported. This included a mixture of online and in person drop-in sessions, focus groups with the BPCF, and sessions at The Village and Woodfield schools to hear directly from young people with SEND.
- 4.2 A series of 11 workshops were held for internal stakeholders across the Childrens and Young People directorate who work with children and young people with SEND, to discuss the changes to the Travel Assistance Policy and introduce Independent Travel Training. These were well received with over 50 participants from a wide range of teams attending.
- 4.3 At the Branching Out event on 16 October 2024, the Independent Travel Training service was promoted to parents, carers and young people aged 14+ who attended. From this, 5 names and contact details were provided from parents/carers of young people with the potential to be travel trained, and a number of connections were made with organisations that support SEND families in Brent. The same service has also been promoted in online and face to face meetings of the BPCF on 26 and 30 September 2024.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 Part 3 of the Council's Constitution states that the Corporate Director of Children and Young People has delegated authority to approve the award of contracts for services valued at less than £2 million. The estimated value of the Contract is under this threshold.
- 5.2 The cost of the Contract will be funded from £475,000 from Invest to Save monies approved by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and a £35,000 per annum contribution from Public Health committed for 3 years, with a review for additional contract years, equating to a maximum of £175,000.

- 5.3 The investment is expected to produce a net return on investment position of £630,000 by the end of 2028/29 as detailed in the 'Home to school transport policy implementation – business case September 2024'. 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 It is confirmed that the evaluated price of the recommended tender (Contractor 3) is within the allocated budget.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The estimated value of the Contract over its lifetime is in excess of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the "PCR 2015") threshold for Schedule 3 Services and the award of the Contract is therefore governed by the Light Touch Regime under the PCR 2015. Section 3 of the report outlines how the Contract was procured in accordance with the PCR 2015
- 6.2 The award of the Contract is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts. The Corporate Director of Childrens and Young People has delegated power to award Medium Value Contracts in accordance with paragraph 9.5 of Part 3 of the Constitution.
- 6.3 The Council will observe a voluntary 10 calendar day standstill period under the PCR 2015 before the Contract can be awarded. Therefore, once the Corporate Director of Childrens and Young People has determined which tenderer should be awarded the Contract, all tenderers will be issued with written notification of the Contract award decision. A minimum 10 calendar day standstill period will then be observed before the Contract is concluded – this period will begin the day after all Tenderers are sent notification of the award decision – and additional debrief information will be provided to unsuccessful tenderers in accordance with the PCR 2015. The standstill period will run concurrently with the Council's usual call-in process. Subject to there being no call-in, after the standstill period ends, the successful tenderer will be issued with a letter of acceptance and the Contract can commence.
- 6.4 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 to award has been on the Forward Plan for the requisite 28 days.
- 6.5 The recommended award will not involve the transfer of staff pursuant to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ("TUPE"). There are no TUPE implications as this is a new service which the Council has procured and therefore there is no existing service provider. There are no direct staffing implications for Council staff arising from the tendering of the Contract.

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 proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications. The overall Travel Assistance Policy has been the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment. This is included as Appendix 3.
- 7.6 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse health equality implications. The development of an Independent Travel Training service is assessed to have a positive impact on Health Outcomes for young people with SEND in Brent and as such is receiving a budget contribution from Public Health funding to enable the procurement of the service.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 The successful training of young people to travel independently will over time reduce the use of special needs transport minibuses and taxis, thus having a positive impact on Brent's environment. The ITT service and the Social Value undertakings included within the Contract will positively contribute to another of the Council's priorities of 'A cleaner, Greener Future' and a strategic aim for keeping Brent on the move through active travel plans.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations

- 9.1 This is a new service for Brent and as it will be provided by an external contractor and there are no direct implications for existing Council staff arising from awarding the Contract. There are no TUPE implications as this is a new service which the Council has procured and therefore there is no existing service provider.
- 9.2 As part of the overall 'Business Case: Children and Young People aged 0-25 in Education Travel Assistance Policy Implementation Plan July 2024', additional resource will be recruited into the new Access to Education and Travel Assistance team. One key responsibility of new roles to be introduced will be to work with the ITT

service supplier to validate referrals to the service, work with professionals, schools, parents, carers and young people to have a steady pipeline of young people to be independently travel trained.

- 9.3 By agreement with the Council, the contractor may at times utilise Brent Civic Centre and other Council property for meetings, events and activities for young people, otherwise the service will be delivered in the community and from the contractor's premises.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 There are a number of communications considerations around the introduction of the Contract for both the Council and the recommended contractor. Key considerations in the initial six month mobilisation phase will be the promotion of the service to establish a pipeline of potential candidates for training, and engagement with stakeholder groups around the prioritisation of candidates.
- 10.2 The tender process required bidders to identify key stakeholder groups and outline their engagement plan and this will be enacted immediately from the start of the Contract to ensure there is a steady pipeline of young people to be trained. The Transformation and Engagement Officer assigned to the overall Travel Assistant project will be working closely with the contractor from the start date of the Contract through to the end of March 2025 to ensure it is well known and there are young people identified and ready to be trained.

Related documents:

[Authority to Tender Contract for an Independent Travel Training Service](#)

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director of Children and Young People