

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cllr Sanderson – Deputy Leader

Date: 23 June 2025

Subject: Travel Care Taxi Framework Award

Report author: Joe Gunning, Head of Programmes

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon, Executive Director People's Services

SUMMARY

The Travel Care Taxi Procurement Strategy was agreed by Cabinet on the 9 September 2024. Following the procurement exercise this report seeks approval to appoint several suppliers onto a Framework for the provision of Travel Care Taxi services for eligible children, young people and vulnerable adults in Hammersmith and Fulham. This service is primarily for travel to and from special schools and day centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy Leader approves:

1. Appendices 1 and 2 are not for publication on the basis that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. The appointment of the preferred bidders to Lot 1 - Regular and Scheduled Taxi Provision of the Travel Care Taxi Framework for the duration of the four-year Framework.
3. The appointment of the preferred bidders to Lot 2 - Ad-hoc Taxi Provision of the Travel Care Taxi Framework for the duration of the four-year Framework.
4. The following selection and approval methods for the award of call-off contracts for both Lot 1 - Regular and Scheduled Taxi Provision and Lot 2 - Ad-hoc Taxi Provision:
 - a. That the ranking of taxi suppliers (as detailed in the exempt Appendix 1 of this report) be used to directly award all call-off taxi contracts for both Lot 1 - Regular and Scheduled Taxi Provision and Lot 2 - Ad-hoc Taxi Provision according to their ranked positions, unless a mini-competition is required as outlined in the recommendation b below.
 - b. That for out-of-Borough, longer distance, and TUPE-related contracts, and when in the Council's interests to do so, suppliers on the relevant Lot of the Framework will be invited to participate in a mini-competition instead of as outlined in recommendation a. above.

- c. That the decision to award and enter into a call-off contract, valued at £100,000 and under, be delegated to the Head of Travel Care.
 - d. Should any taxi contract be valued at £100,000 or more, that this contract will be awarded by the Head of Travel Care in consultation with the Director of Commissioning, Transformation and Partnerships.
5. The commencement of the 4-year Framework beginning on or around 1 August 2025.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Employment of local residents on essential frontline services.
Creating a compassionate council	Procuring services that have care at the forefront of delivery for some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Maintaining high standards of existing contracts following lessons learnt experience from previous procurements.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Frameworks that are appropriately structured and weighted to meet demand as well as need and drive competitiveness in the market.
Taking pride in H&F	A high-quality service supporting some of our most vulnerable residents to access education and social care provision.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The contractors must comply with the requirements specified by Transport for London for the London Emission Zone (LEZ) including any current or future legislative requirements including Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

Financial Impact

1. The spend for transport costs is demand driven and reflects the complex cohort of children and young people often requiring transport to distant placements.
2. Costs are based on a minimum base rate, plus banded mileage rates. The average increase in costs across Lot 1 is 10%. This reflects the increase in London Living Wage for 2024/25 of 5%, 3% inflation impact and 2% National

Insurance impact. This is a similar profile based on forecasted activity for Lot 2. This is in part offset by the 2025/26 budget increase.

3. Place Planning activity is currently underway and will inform the future requirements for the framework in the new academic year.
4. The budget is inclusive of both minibuss and taxi transport provision.

WHOLE TRANSPORT BUDGET

	Annual Budget £m	2025/26 current forecast £m
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Travel Care and Support	£7.341	£7.341 Of which £4.698m relates to taxi travel.
Children Looked After (CLA) Transport	£0.640	£0.855
Total	£7.980	£8.196

5. The impact on SEN Travel Care for 2025/26 is expected to be circa £0.274m (7/12) based on current activity. The budget includes inflationary award for 2025/26. The adverse impact is proposed to be offset by Medium Term Financial Strategy activity in 2026/27.
6. The impact of CLA Transport is expected to be circa £0.050m (7/12) based on current activity. The budget includes inflationary award for 2025/26.

Inflation	2025/26 (part year) £m	Full Year £m
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Travel Care and Support	0.274m	0.470
Children Looked After (CLA) Transport	0.050	0.086

7. The impact will be monitored via Corporate Revenue Monitoring processes as the new framework is implemented and call-offs undertaken.
8. This follows an MTFS saving in 2025/26 of £0.200m, and a 2026/27 medium term financial strategy being developed.

Finance implications by: Tony Burton, Head of Finance Children's and Education, 11 June 2025.

Verified by: James Newman, AD Finance, 17 June 2025

Legal Implications

This report recommends that the Cabinet Member approves the establishment of a Framework for Travel Care Taxi Services for eligible children, young people and

vulnerable adults to special schools and day centres and the appointment of named suppliers to the Framework. In accordance with the decision of the Cabinet dated 9th September 2024, a procurement was carried out using the 'open procedure' under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ('PCR') (the legislation that was in force at the start of the procurement) in 2 Lots, Lot 1 for regular and scheduled provision and Lot 2 for ad hoc journeys. The term of the Framework will be 4 years. Calling off from Lot 1 will be carried by direct award to the highest-ranking supplier and calling off from Lot 2 will be carried out similarly by direct award to the highest-ranking supplier (with the exception of where a direct award to the highest ranked supplier would lead to Tupe implications in which case, a mini-competition will be carried out). The award of each call off will be delegated to the Head of Travel Care either alone or in consultation with the Director of Commissioning, Transportation and Partnerships, depending on its value. The Council's Contract Standing Orders must be followed before each call off is entered into.

Tenders from two suppliers were rejected on the ground that they were abnormally low following the procedure set out in Regulation 69 of the PCR.

The decision is a Key Decision (see Article 12 of the Constitution) and the report must be submitted to Committee Services for publication on the Council's website.

The appropriate decision maker is the Cabinet Member.

Implications by: Angela Hogan, Chief Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement), 11th June 2025

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

1. This report seeks approval to establish a four-year Travel Care Taxi Framework from August 2025. Taxi services under individual call-off contracts will commence from September 2025 at the start of the new academic year.
2. A full and open compliant procurement exercise has taken place, and the outcome of the procurement is positive. A highly competitive response was received from the market. Suppliers could bid for either Lot 1 or Lot 2 or both Lots and a total of 25 individual suppliers submitted bids. 19 bids were received for Lot 1 (regular scheduled taxi services), and 17 bids were received for Lot 2 (ad-hoc taxi services) and therefore a total of 36 individual tenders were received and evaluated.
3. The proposal is to appoint suppliers to a Framework Agreement for Travel Care Transport Taxi services which is split into two Lots, with separate specifications and requirements. Tenderers were invited to bid within each lot for six specified

driver-only vehicle categories and six specified driver and passenger assistant categories.

4. The procurement was undertaken using the open procedure (without a pre-qualification stage). Tenders received were evaluated in three stages, including qualification (pass/fail minimum standards), technical (quality), and commercial (price). For Lot 1, the criteria for award consisted of 60% for quality and 40% for price. For Lot 2 the criteria for award consisted of 40% quality and 60% price.
5. Of the suppliers who tendered, five did not pass the Councils' qualification criteria which detailed minimum requirements relating to financial and economic standing. At the next stage, three suppliers did not pass the quality stage of Lot 1 and three providers did not pass the quality stage of Lot 2, as their responses to the quality criteria did not demonstrate satisfactory evidence that they could deliver the service to the Councils' specified standards, tenderers having been advised that any tenderers scoring 1 or 0 on any Method Statement would be rejected. At the commercial stage. Full scoring is set out in exempt appendix.
6. Pricing was evaluated by each tenderer submitting a price per mile for the different vehicle categories in which they were interested, and this was then factored into an evaluation model considering likely volumes during the year. two tenders were excluded in accordance with the abnormally low provisions within the tender and Regulation 69 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). Full scoring is set out in exempt appendix.
7. The outcome of this procurement is the establishment of a robust and sustainable framework of taxi suppliers, that derives value for money, that has been co-designed by key stakeholders, and that will meet the needs of eligible children, young people and vulnerable adults.
8. The recommendation is to appoint 15 suppliers for Lot 1 Regular Scheduled services and 12 suppliers for Lot 2 Ad-Hoc services. The report also seeks approval for the appropriate delegated authority to call-off contracts from the framework.
9. Each supplier's overall quality score was added to their commercial price score for each vehicle category. The combined quality and commercial scores determine the suppliers' appointment and position on the Framework by a "league table" ranking for each vehicle type. Suppliers will be offered routes according to the direct award call-off process based upon their ranking in the "league table".
10. The ranking of each supplier for each of the Lots according to vehicle type is included in the exempt appendix.

Option 1 – Appoint recommended providers to the Travel Care Taxi Framework (recommended)

11. A rigorous evaluation process took place to ensure that only those suitable to provide a quality service would be appointed on to the framework. The evaluation panel included several Officers and a parent representative from

Parents Active who were able to bring their expertise to evaluate relevant questions.

12. Following appointment onto the Framework, individual contracts will be awarded to the highest scoring taxi supplier (based on combined quality and cost) within each Lot and vehicle category. Where the highest scoring supplier is unable to meet this demand (subject to their capacity and availability) the contract will be awarded to the second highest scoring supplier and so on. This process is referred to as a 'call-off'.
13. Ad-hoc taxi journeys will be called-off as and when they are required according to the Lot 2 league table rankings which can be found in the exempt section of this report.

Option 2 – Do not appoint recommended providers to the Travel Care Taxi Framework (not recommended)

14. This option is not recommended. The Local Authority would not be able to meet its statutory duties and there is no viable alternative. Carrying out a fresh procurement exercise would mean that there is no contract vehicle in place for the Council to use to place its requirements for these services, given that the current framework has expired.

Reasons for Decision

15. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport provisions as per the Education Act 1996. The Council has a Travel Assistance Policy which clearly sets out these duties, together with further information via the Local Offer.
16. For Adults, the Care Act 2014 stipulates a duty to Local Authorities to meet assessed needs, and while transport is not prescribed provision, it may be one way of meeting people's assessed needs and preferences relating to their personal outcomes towards independence and engagement with the community. Spend within Adult Social Care is of low value and ad hoc in nature.
17. The framework which services the existing taxi contracts expires in August 2025 with no option to extend.

Reasons for delegated authority to call-off contracts from the Framework

18. The approval of delegations to award call-off contracts under the Taxi Framework, outlined in the recommendations of this report, is considered necessary because call-off contracts can, especially under Lot 2, consist of a single journey ordered at a few hours' notice. There is also a high volume of contracts required to be placed in time for the start of the academic year. Overall, more than 1,000 call off contracts in the form of individual orders will be required per year. The delegations will enable the service to:

- Offer a quality transport taxi service that is responsive, flexible and offers real-time provision to meet the needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Ensure that the volume of call-off contracts required at the beginning of the new academic year in September is provided without delay or disruption to children and young people's needs.
- Meet the changing demands of passenger transport on an ongoing basis in a timely and efficient manner.
- Achieve best value for the Council by ensuring that where applicable out of borough, longer distance and TUPE related contracts are subject to mini competition.
- Ensure that taxi contracts can be modified to support the Council's fluctuating demands and achieve best value for money through route optimisation whilst also ensuring consistency of service.

Equality Implications

19. The report seeks to maintain the current service specification. There are no direct negative impacts anticipated on protected groups under the Equalities Act 2010.

Risk Management Implications

20. It is recommended that the quality levels of the service are continuously monitored. In addition, it is recommended that the roadworthiness of the fleet used by the supplier as well as all legal requirements to provide the service are checked, including but not limited to licence to operate, driver licences, insurances, tax and MOT of vehicles.

Implications verified by: Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 10th June 2025

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

21. The Council is committed to delivering a net zero carbon borough by 2030, including transport used locally, and expects all fleet vehicles used within its contracts to be zero carbon emissions at tailpipe before this date.
22. Each Contractor is expected as part of the service specification to increase the proportion of electric vehicles used to provide the service over the duration of the contract period. Officers will continue to work collaboratively with providers to increase the EVs in the fleet where viable. The providers' approach to meeting this commitment was assessed as part of the Quality stage of the procurement process.
23. In practice several providers are working to expedite their transition to electric vehicles and Officers will work collaboratively with providers to accelerate this further where possible.

Implications verified by Ben Kennedy – Senior Service Manager, Transport & Climate Change, 06 June 2025

Procurement implications

24. Contract Standing orders require all High Value Contracts to be openly tendered via the Council's capitalSourcing eProcurement portal and publishing a Contract notice on the Finder a Tender Service website. This tender was initiated prior to the New Procurement Act and therefore has been carried out under the rules of the PCR 2015 regulations. It has been completed as required by the CSO's with support from Procurement Colleagues.
25. The results of the evaluation process have been verified.
Project: prj__24767 - Travel Care Taxi Services
itt__18891 - Lot 1 Taxi Services Regular Journeys
itt__18895 - Lot 2 Ad Hoc Journeys
26. Upon award Contract standing orders also require that any contract in excess of £5,000 be recorded on the Council's Contract Register in order to comply with our Transparency Duties and in addition we are required under the PCR's to publish Contract Award Notice with the details of all contracts / framework agreements on the governments Find A tender website as well as on the Contracts Finder website.
27. Officers, on completion of the necessary contract documentation must create a contract entry (and upload a copies of the contracts) they must also create and publish the notices via CapE. A named contract manager must be allocated to the contract.

Joe Sardone Category Lead – People. Procurement and Commercial 10th June 2025

Consultation

28. A parent representative from the parent/carer forum was part of the evaluation panel and was able to bring their expertise and lived experience to evaluate relevant questions.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 (Exempt): Preferred Bidders
Appendix 2 (Exempt): League Tables
Appendix 3 (Exempt): Detailed Scoring