



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Meeting or Decision Maker:

Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality

Date:

14 November 2024

Classification:

Part Exempt

Part B of this report is exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following Paragraph of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972: (iii) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Title:

Body Transportation Services

Wards Affected:

All

Policy Context:

The award of contract recommended in this report is to ensure service continuity in the Coroner's service (through the transportation of deceased persons to mortuary). The City Council is the lead authority in the consortium of boroughs responsible for the funding of the service.

Key Decision:

No

Financial Summary:

The aggregate value of the contract over five years is £3,365,606 (inc VAT). There is an option to extend the contract for a further two years, and if extended the aggregate cost would be £4,709,448 (inc VAT). The City Council's share of these costs would be £644,233 for five years, and an additional £257,234.

Report of:

Parveen Akhtar, Executive Director of Corporate Services

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report recommends approval to award a contract to BM Ambulance Group Limited for the delivery of Body Transportation Services within Westminster, Royal Borough Kensington and Chelsea, Merton and Wandsworth on behalf of HM Coroner for Inner West London.
- 1.2. The Coroner is an independent judicial officer, but the City Council is the lead authority for the consortium of local authorities which is responsible for providing support and funding.
- 1.3. The total contract sum is for £2,804,672 excluding VAT, (£3,365,606 inclusive of VAT) for the initial period of 5 years (11/11/2024 to 10/11/2029), with the option to extend for an additional period of two years at an additional cost of £1,119,868 excluding VAT, (£1,343,841 inclusive of VAT). The full contract term is potentially seven years at a total contract value of £3,924,540 excluding VAT, (£4,709,448 inclusive of VAT).
- 1.4. The procurement was led by Westminster as lead authority, and Westminster will be the sole signatory on the contract, but the contractor will provide body collection and transportation for all four boroughs, with the cost split between them dependent upon each borough's population size as set out below.
- 1.5. The procurement has been undertaken in accordance with the City Council's Procurement Code, and via an open tender as the contract value is above the Public Contract Regulations threshold.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality:

- 2.1. Approves the award of the contract for body transportation services to BM Ambulance Group Ltd to the value of £3,924,540 (inc VAT) for a period of five years to November 2029, with the option for the City Council to extend for a further two years at a value of £1,343,841 (inc VAT). Total contract value of £4,709,448 (inc VAT).

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1. Following the expiry of the current temporary six-month contract arrangement, a permanent contract for the provision of body transportation services for the Inner West London Coroner's jurisdiction is required. A procurement exercise has been undertaken in accordance with the City Council's Procurement Code.

4. Background, including Policy Context

- 4.1. Westminster City Council is part of the Consortium of London Councils. The aim of the Consortium is to support London's communities in the provision of services such as Body Transportation and Mortuaries.

4.2. As part of a collaborative approach in response to the coroner's statutory duty to provide a discreet and dignified service for the collection of bodies within the following Boroughs, Westminster City Council, on behalf of the Consortium, led in procuring body transportation services with funeral directors to support London's communities and collect bodies within:

- A) the City of Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea from the place of death to the Westminster Mortuary, 1 Regency PI, London SW1P 2EB
- B) London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth from the place of death to the Mortuary at St George's Hospital Mortuary, Cranmer Terrace, Tooting, London SW17

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The value of this contract is £2,804,672 (ex VAT) over the five years to November 2029, which is £644,233 per annum.
- 5.2. Further information is included in the Part B confidential appendix.

6. Legal and Governance Implications

- 6.1. The proposed contract award is a public contract for services under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the PCR's"). The estimated contract value is above the relevant threshold and therefore is subject to the full implications of the PCR's.
- 6.2. The Council has undertaken a competitive tender in accordance with the PCRs. As it is the incumbent provider who will continue to deliver the services there is no anticipated expectation that a TUPE will apply as a result of this contract award.
- 6.3. The appropriate contract award notice will need to be published on Contracts Finder within a reasonable time.
- 6.4. The Council shall observe the standstill period of at least 10 days. During this period, the Council shall issue standstill notices to all relevant bidders of their decision to award the contract.
- 6.5. As this contract award is above £1.5M, it is for the appropriate Cabinet Member following endorsement to approve from the appropriate Executive Leadership Team Member and CGRB to approve this contract award

- 6.6. Legal input should be sought in the preparation of the contract and to undertake the appropriate execution formalities. As the contract value exceeds £175,000 ss4.3.6 of the Council's Procurement Code requires the contract to be sealed as a deed.

7. Climate Impact

- 7.1. Sustainability criteria have been considered as part of the contract evaluation process. BM Ambulances Ltd have a 2035 target for a fully decarbonised fleet, all electric or hydrogen fuel cell. They commit to use one electric vehicle for delivery of this contract (out of two), and the other vehicle will be hybrid. The company uses efficient road mapping technology to identify most efficient energy routes.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1. None

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact:

Hayley Davies, Coroner's Court Manager

APPROVED BY

List relevant officers by their title only – this MUST be completed

Name and Title	Date sent	Date approved
Executive Director	18 October 2024	24 October 2024
Finance	18 October 2024	18 October 2024
Legal	18 October 2024	18 October 2024
Governance	24 October 2024	6 November 2024

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Confidential Part B Cabinet Member Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Declaration of Interest


I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed:  Date: 14 November 2024

Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality

NAME: **CLLR PAUL DIMOLDENBERG**

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled: **Body Transportation Services** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed: 

Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality

Date: 14 November 2024
