

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Education, Children, and Families Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref: NLC-CPT-25-077

Date: 03 March 2026

Contract Award for the Framework Agreement for Ad-Hoc Minibus and Coach Hire

From Barry Smedley, Chief Officer (Education – North) and Lyall Rennie, Chief Officer (Community Operations)

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Executive Summary

In accordance with the councils General Contract Standing Orders (GCSOs), the Committee is asked to approve the award of a Framework Agreement for Ad-Hoc Minibus and Coach Hire (the 'Framework Agreement') following the undertaking of a procurement procedure as detailed within this report below.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Education, Children & Families Committee:

- (1) Approves the award of the Framework Agreement to the 12 "Contractors" stated in Appendix 1 of this report at the maximum value of One Million Six Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling (£1,600,000.00) exclusive of VAT across the Framework Agreements full term which is made up of a period of 48 months (with no option to extend) that is anticipated to commence on 01 May 2026.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority All priorities

Ambition Statement All ambition statements

Programme of Work Brighter Futures

1. Background

- 1.1 The council requires the provision of passenger transport services to supplement its existing arrangements managed by Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) for school pupil transport (drop-offs and pickups before and after the school day), and transport for pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN).

- 1.2 To enable the delivery of key and critical service provision, there is a requirement for the council to implement a contractual arrangement to provide ad-hoc passenger journeys, primarily for educational purposes but available for use by other council departments.
- 1.3 Transport required via the Framework Agreement will be used for a variety of purposes, including (but not limited to) one-off day trips, educational visits, cultural excursions and short-term block bookings such as swimming lessons, sports training etc.
- 1.4 The Framework Agreement shall include the provision of appropriately sized and equipped vehicles, qualified drivers, and compliance with all relevant safety and safeguarding standards. Optional elements, such as enhanced accessibility features or additional vehicle capacities, may be considered or sought via the Framework Agreement but are not mandatory.
- 1.5 The council has a vehicle fleet that may be available to utilise for specific requirements like those required via the Framework Agreement and as agreed between internal service areas, where the need for minibus or coach hire arises, appropriate dialogue should first be with the councils Fleet Services to determine the availability of the councils existing vehicle fleet. Therefore, the Framework Agreement is being implemented by the council on the basis that it shall act as a contingency measure should the council's own vehicle fleet be unavailable for use.
- 1.6 Given service demand cannot be guaranteed and to ensure an appropriate and flexible contractual arrangement can be implemented, a multi lot and multi supplier framework agreement was identified as the most appropriate style of contractual arrangement to put in situ.
- 1.7 The Framework Agreement comprises of five "Lots" as detailed below to ensure appropriate coverage of different sized and varying specifications of vehicles required.
 - Lot 1 – 4 to 16 Seat Vehicles (Excl .Driver)
 - Lot 2 – 17 to 34 Seat Vehicles (Excl .Driver)
 - Lot 3 – 35 to 53 Seat Vehicles (Excl .Driver)
 - Lot 4 – 54 to 69 Seat Vehicles (Excl .Driver)
 - Lot 5 – 70+ Seat Vehicles (Excl .Driver)
- 1.8 Given the scale of the Framework Agreement, and to maximise service offering, the Framework Agreement shall result in multiple contractors being appointed. For each Lot, a maximum of seven Contractors could be appointed. Within the procurement procedure, Tenderers could bid for a single, multiple or all Lots and could be appointed to all Lots.
- 1.9 Recognising those who may be required to access the services via the Framework Agreement, as well as the services to be delivered, appropriate legal provision in regard to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and Data Protection Act 2018 are prevalent within the Framework Agreement. Additionally, the following provision has also been considered and applied within the Framework Agreement:
 - Contractors are required to hold a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator's Licence for carrying passengers for hire or reward.
 - Contractors need the correct PCV licence and Driver CPC certification.

- Vehicles must comply with Construction and Use Regulations and be maintained to DVSA standards.
 - Scottish Government Guidance: Health & Safety on Educational Excursions
 - Requires risk assessments for transport, supervision ratios, and emergency planning.
 - Schools must ensure providers have appropriate insurance and safety measures.
- 1.10 Historically, where the council identified a need for minibus and coach hire, suppliers appointed by SPT for school pupil transport were utilised or delivered internally on occasion by the councils Fleet Services.
- 1.11 To enable appropriate development and execution of the procedure required to form the Framework Agreement, a panel of technical and procurement representatives (the “User Intelligence Group (UIG)”) was formed.
- 1.12 The UIG consisted of representation and collaboration from multiple service areas and departments and were responsible for developing the required internal contract strategy (the “Contract Strategy”) for the Framework Agreement. The Contract Strategy sets out the parameters and approaches the council would apply within the procurement, tendering, contracting and end of life stages of the Framework Agreement following appropriate analysis, research and investigation to ensure the council achieves maximum benefit where possible. In accordance with GCSO 4.4, the Contract Strategy for the Framework Agreement was approved on 30 October 2025.
- 1.13 Furthermore, as part of the development of the Contract Strategy, the council undertook a number of pre-tender / market engagement activities to assist in shaping the Framework Agreement. These tasks included the publication of Prior Information Notice to alert the market to the upcoming opportunity whilst also requesting the completion and submission of an online market questionnaire to assist the council in shaping the Framework Agreement whilst raising any potential improvements, considerations etc. for the council to include in its details of requirements. Additionally, the council also engaged with the Supplier Development Programme Scotland to undertake appropriate support and training for those interested in submitting a tender within the procurement procedure.
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2. Report

- 2.1 The initial estimated value of the Framework Agreement dictated that the opportunity be considered as a “Higher Threshold Regulated” procurement procedure. On 30 October 2025, a Contract Notice for the opportunity was published on the Public Contracts Scotland and the UK Find a Tender (FTS) website. Additionally, and to maximise exposure of the opportunity, the council’s social media team posted on the council’s social platforms to advise the opportunity was live and direct interested parties to the published contract notices.
- 2.2 As determined within the Contract Strategy, the procurement procedure was undertaken as an “Open Procedure”. The Open Procedure is a single stage competitive procurement procedure where following the publication of the Contract Notice, any interested party could submit a tender.
- 2.3 Based on the evaluation criteria and scoring methodology set out in the procurement procedure, an evaluation of tenders received was completed by members identified by the UIG as having the technical knowledge and experience to evaluate tenders in a professional and fair manner.

- 2.4 Following completion of the procurement procedure in line with the terms, conditions and processes contained within, the recommended Contractor has been evaluated as submitting the most economically advantageous tender.
- 2.5 Appendixes 1 and 2 provide a summary of the procurement procedure undertaken including the key considerations and outcomes.

Financial / Budget Consideration

- 2.6 The pre-tender whole life estimate budget for the Framework Agreement is One Million Six Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling (£1,600,000.00). The costs associated with delivery of the Framework Agreement will be contained within multiple budgets for numerous departments and services areas throughout the council however mainly for educational establishments.

Price Stability

- 2.7 Prices within the Framework Agreement are fixed and unchangeable for the first 12 months. Thereafter, prices / rates may be subject to review prior to the application of the next 12-month period. This review shall in no circumstances introduce increases greater than the % level of RPI at the time of the request and where accepted, rates shall remain fixed for the remainder of the duration of the Framework Agreement unless requested in the next available price review period.

Community Benefits

- 2.8.1 The council is committed to maximising the delivery of community benefits. The procurement included a community benefit requirement; this approach is designed to deliver local community benefits where possible.
- 2.8.2 Within their tender, the recommended Contractor committed to deliver community benefits as detailed within Appendix 2 of this report:
- 2.8.3 The community benefits committed as part of the Framework Agreement includes the possible creation of jobs and / or apprenticeships.
- 2.8.4 Given that service demand and spend cannot be guaranteed within the Framework Agreement, Contractors shall only be obligated to deliver a proportion or all their committed Community Benefits as and when they meet specific spend thresholds.

Fair Work First and Payment of the Living Wage

- 2.9.1 Within tender submissions, recommended Contractors intimated that they would commit to the various areas of the Scottish Governments "Fair Work First" initiative:
- 2.9.2 Further information on the Living Wage status of the recommended Contractors is detailed in Appendix 1.

Contract Management

- 2.10 Officers from Fleet Services, Community Operations will be responsible for managing the Framework Agreement which will be undertaken in accordance with the contract and supplier management conditions applied within the Framework Agreement.
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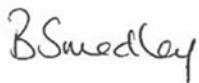
3. Measures of success

The Framework Agreement will deliver the following outcomes;

- 3.1 Best Value will be demonstrated as outlined in Appendix 2,
- 3.2 the appointment of Contractors who have the experience and capability to deliver a high quality and responsive transport solution for the council,
- 3.3 the procurement procedure was compliant with the procurement legislation and internal procedures,
- 3.4 the Agreement secured a range of community benefits, and
- 3.5 a collaborative approach to the procurement of the requirement, minimising the burden on internal resource and leveraging the economies of scale.
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4. Supporting documents

Appendix 1	Contractor Appointments
Appendix 2	Summary of Procurement Procedure



Barry Smedley
Chief Officer (Education – North)



Lyall Rennie
Chief Officer (Community Operations)

5. Impacts (<http://connect/report-template-guidance>)

5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty

Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- Where necessary, vehicles must be accessible to pupils with disabilities (e.g. wheelchair access, ramps, seatbelt adaptations).
- Drivers and escorts should have awareness of disability and additional support needs.
- Services must not discriminate against pupils based on protected characteristics (disability, religion/belief, etc.).
- Consideration of reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusivity.

Fairer Scotland Duty

- Ensuring affordable and fair access to transport across different schools and communities.
- Supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds by reducing barriers to attending trips, events, or short courses (e.g. swimming lessons).
- Contract design that does not unintentionally disadvantage certain groups of pupils or communities (e.g. rural vs urban access).

If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website?
<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments>

Yes No

5.2 Financial impact

Does the report contain any financial impacts?

Yes No

If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.3 HR policy impact

Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?

Yes No

If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.4 Legal impact

Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?

Yes No

If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

All procurement procedures will have potential legal implications however throughout this Framework Agreement, compliance with the councils General Contract Standing Orders and the relevant procurement regulations has been maintained with advice from colleagues in Corporate Procurement and Legal Services sought as and when required.

The Agreement align with the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) and the Fairer Scotland Duty, ensuring that equality and socio-economic considerations are embedded in the procurement process. In addition, relevant transport legislation, licensing requirements, and safeguarding obligations under the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 and Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 will apply.

5.5 Data protection impact

Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes No

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes No

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes No

5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

The Agreement may affect carbon emissions through vehicle use. In line with Scotland's net zero targets, the specification should encourage low-emission or Euro VI-compliant vehicles and efficient route planning. While ad hoc journeys have a smaller footprint than daily transport, suppliers should demonstrate sustainable practices where possible.

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Agreement will support the safe and reliable transport of children and young people for educational purposes, including school trips and activities. This contributes to their learning experience, wellbeing, and inclusion. The specification will include safeguarding measures, such as PVG compliance for drivers and escorts, and adherence to health and safety standards to protect all passengers.

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes No

Appendix 1 – Contractor Appointments

Contractor Registered Name	Contractor Registered Local Authority	Contractor Size	Declared They are Paying the Living Wage	Living Wage Accredited	Appointed to Lot				
					Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5
Blue Bus Limited	North Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Calmac Executive Travel Limited	North Lanarkshire	Micro	Yes	No	✓				
Doigs Limited	Glasgow City	Small	Yes	No					✓
Golden Eagle Coaches Limited	North Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No			✓	✓	✓
I Travel Transport Services Limited	North Lanarkshire	Micro	Yes	No	✓				
K White Transport	North Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No		✓			
Kevin's Coaches Limited	North Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
L A Travel Limited	East Dunbartonshire	Small	Yes	No			✓	✓	✓
MacPhails Coaches Limited	North Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Millers Coaches Scotland Limited	North Lanarkshire	Micro	Yes	No	✓	✓	✓		
Park's of Hamilton (Coach Hirers) Limited	South Lanarkshire	Large	Yes	No	✓	✓		✓	✓
Photoflash Travel Limited	South Lanarkshire	Small	Yes	No		✓	✓	✓	

Appendix 2 – Summary of Procurement Procedure

Overview	Reference	NLC–CPT-25-077				
	Title	Framework Agreement for Ad-Hoc Minibus and Coach Hire				
	Classification	Services - Standard				
	Responsible Chief Officer and Position	Barry Smedley, Chief Officer (Education – North) and Lyall Rennie, Chief Officer (Community Operations)				
Competition and Framework Agreement Overview	Governance by Value	Higher Threshold - Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015				
	Route to Market	Open Procedure				
	General Overview	Total / Maximum Value	£1,600,000	Contract Duration (Months)	48	
	Award Criteria	Quality Weighting	40.00%	Price Weighting	60.00%	
	Interest	Total Expression of Interest (Eoi)	43	Eoi from NLC Based Businesses	22	
	Sub-Lot Reference	Lot 1	Lot 2	Lot 3	Lot 4	Lot 5
	Total No. of Tenders Received	16	13	13	12	9
	No. of Tenders From SME's	15	12	12	11	8
	No. Tenders from NLC Based Businesses	13	10	10	9	6
	No. of Tenders Excluded	4	4	3	3	4
	No. of Compliant Tenders	12	9	10	9	5
	No. of Tenderers to be Appointed:	7	7	7	7	5

	Successful Scores	59.75% – 96.00%	61.58% – 94.90%	62.26% – 89.00%	58.84% – 87.00%	53.12% – 85.70%
	Unsuccessful Score Range	39.02% – 55.42%	40.17% – 58.86%	41.31% – 61.80%	31.60% – 57.33%	Not Applicable
	Max Sub-Lot Value	£80,000	£240,000	£560,000	£640,000	£80,000
	How Has “Best Value” Been Demonstrated?	<p>is anticipated that the Framework Agreement shall demonstrate Best Value as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> was procured in the form of a competitive procurement procedure which has been aided by significant internal collaboration and external market engagement; explored opportunities to mobilise and utilise the councils existing knowledge, experience, assets and vehicle fleet to potentially deliver required services internally wherever possible; shall enable the continuous delivery of key services to school children and teachers, vulnerable people, staff, elected members etc. provides an opportunity to enable economies of scale and cashable savings to the councils’ requirements by standardising the service offerings; should lead to a reduction in purchase to pay transactions therefore creating an efficiency in the number of invoices the council is required to progress. ensure appropriate legal and safeguarding provisions are in situ i.e. vehicle standards, licensing obligations, data protection, protection of vulnerable groups etc. allows the council the opportunity to explore how requirements could be delivered in an environmentally friendly manner in line within the council Climate Action Plan 2030 whilst also seeking alternate ways for the disposal of associated items; and resulted commitment of additional benefits to the North Lanarkshire community whilst encouraging the application of Fair Work First to all appointed Contractors. 				
	Additional Comments	Tenders were excluded (as detailed above) for reasons including (but not limited to), submitting incorrect / incomplete documentation, failing to respond to council clarification messages despite multiple reminders etc.				
Community Benefits	Overview of Community Benefits	Community Benefit Outcome	Qty Offered	Community Benefit Outcome	Qty Offered	
		Business Event / Briefing to promote supply chain opportunities	2	MCR Pathways 1-2-1 Mentoring Programme (or equivalent Programme)	1	
		Business Mentoring and Advice to support to an SME / Social Enterprise / Voluntary organisation	3	New Job for an Individual from a Priority Group (Part Time)	11	

		Educational Sponsorship	2	New Job for an Individual not from a Priority Group (Full Time)	11
		Educational Support and Skills Transfer	2	Non-financial Support for a Community Project / Organisation	12
		Educational Visits	6	Work Experience Placement for an individual aged 14 to 16 years of age	7
		Educational Workplace Visit	7	Work Experience Placement for an individual 16+ years of age	11
		Financial Support for a Community Project / Organisation	12	Work Experience Placement to obtain a "Foundation Apprenticeship"	6
	Additional Comments	It is anticipated that Contractors appointed to any Lot within: the Framework Agreement shall only be required to deliver committed Community Benefits to an agreed level as and when they breach appropriate spend / business thresholds.			

Impacts Summary,	Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HR Policy Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data Protection Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment / Carbon Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Risk Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Financial Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Legal Impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Technology / Digital Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comms Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Armed Forces Covenant Duty	<input type="checkbox"/>		