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Tender

Provision of Transport Services - Knowsley, Rochdale, St. Helens, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford Council

Knowsley Council

Rochdale Borough Council

St Helens Council

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Trafford Council

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-080236

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05156d ([view related notices](#))

Published 5 December 2025, 2:39pm

Scope

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Commercial tool

Establishes an open framework

A series of frameworks with substantially the same terms. Awarded suppliers are carried

over and new suppliers can bid.

Total value (estimated)

- £446,000,000 excluding VAT
- £535,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2034
- 8 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 60120000 - Taxi services
- 80340000 - Special education services

Contract locations

- UKC - North East (England)
- UKD - North West (England)
- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber
- UKF - East Midlands (England)

- UKG - West Midlands (England)
 - UKH - East of England
 - UKI - London
 - UKJ - South East (England)
 - UKK - South West (England)
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Lot 1. Knowsley Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

- Passenger assistants - The Supplier will provide a PA where required.
- To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours):
 - o Elderly people
 - o Council employees

2 Breakdown of Requirements

1. SEND Children's Home to School Transport including Post 16 transport

- Bluebell Park & East Croft Primary, Kirkby - Approx 185 Service users
- Alt Bridge Huyton - Approx 240 Service users

- Knowsley Central Huyton - Approx 90 Service users
- Meadow Park Stockbridge Village and Northwood Kirkby - Approx 50 Service users
- Yewtree and Finch Woods Halewood - Approx 90 Service users
- Out of Borough - Approx 300 Service users
- Post 16 (Higher Education and College Transport) - Approx 70 Service users

2. Children's Social Care Transport, Ad Hoc Adult Social Care Transport (Inside and Out of Borough) and Ad Hoc Transport for Council Employees and Members

3. Adults' Home to Day Centre Care and respite Transport

4. Adults' Transport - Day trips and excursions (Inside and Out of Borough)

Quantities and measures in this contract cannot be guaranteed

Lot value (estimated)

- £80,000,000 excluding VAT
- £96,000,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 2. Rochdale Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Passenger assistants - Passenger assistants are provided by Rochdale Council unless Rochdale Council requests the Operator to provide a passenger assistant. To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours):

2 Indicative locations and volumes

Rochdale Borough Council has 4 special schools, 4 mainstream schools with specialist (resourced) provision places, 4 HUBS but also places children and young people in schools within other local authorities if appropriate.

At the start of the Academic year 2025 the Council had 300 routes operating and 825 children and young people utilising SEND Transport. It is predicted that the number of routes will increase in 2026-2027 as more children and young people require specialist educational settings.

Lot value (estimated)

- £80,000,000 excluding VAT
- £96,000,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 3. St Helens Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Passenger assistants - The Supplier will provide a PA where required.

To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours):

Elderly people

Breakdown of Requirements

St Helens Council provides transport daily to approximately 800 children and young people, this number is subject to change. The Council has 3 special schools and several resource bases in mainstream schools. St Helens Council also have young people who attend their educational setting in a different local authority.

The Service Provider shall deliver flexible and safe transport for eligible children and young people aged 4-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The service must include transport for post-16 learners and for pupils placed both within and outside the St Helens area.

The Provider may also be required to deliver ad-hoc transport for elderly or vulnerable adults where commissioned by the St Helens Council.

Lot value (estimated)

- £80,000,000 excluding VAT
- £96,000,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 4. Stockport Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Passenger assistants - The Supplier will provide a PA where required.

To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours) to overnight short break stays this can include evening and weekend during term time and school holidays

- Young adults (19-25) to education provisions
- The suppliers should contact families, via phone call initially, prior to transport commencing to introduce themselves, and discuss the transport requirements for the passenger. An introductory visit should then arranged with them, if they feel that this is necessary before any route begins.

Lot value (estimated)

- £70,000,000 excluding VAT
- £84,000,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 5. Tameside Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Scope

- Passenger assistants - The Supplier will provide a PA where required.
- To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours):

Elderly people

children and young people (aged 3 - 25 years of age) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Vulnerable adults to access an educational setting, respite care or day care.

(Vulnerable Adults only applicable to Tameside Council)

Lot value (estimated)

- £80,000,000 excluding VAT
- £96,000,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot 6. Trafford Council

Description

The Councils require the provision of Transport Services, including for young people between home and school (the "Services"). The Supplier will be expected to provide the Services for specific Councils, with the aims of good quality, safety, value for money and sustainability. The Councils also aim to avoid disruption in supply.

Scope

- Passenger assistants - The Supplier will provide a PA where required.
- To transport other types of passengers (outside of school run hours):
- including vulnerable adults.
- (Vulnerable Adults only applicable to Trafford Council)

Lot value (estimated)

- £56,000,000 excluding VAT
- £67,200,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Framework

Open framework scheme end date (estimated)

31 March 2034

Maximum number of suppliers

Unlimited

Maximum percentage fee charged to suppliers

0%

Framework operation description

A Call-Off Contract by a Purchasing Body may be awarded by Direct Award or Mini-Competition.

DIRECT AWARD OPTIONS

Where a Purchasing Body elects to award a Call-Off Contract by Direct Award, the award shall be made using one of the following permitted methods. The Purchasing Body shall specify the applicable method in the Contract Particulars and contract award notice.

Option 1 - Lowest rate per mile

- The call-off contract may be awarded to the Operator offering the lowest rate per mile for the specified requirement, provided that:

- (a) All Framework Suppliers submitted a price rate per mile information when applying to join the Framework; and

- (b) The award decision is objective, transparent and based solely on the lowest rate per mile.

- Where the lowest price rate per mile Framework Supplier is unable to fulfil the Order, the Purchasing Body may offer the contract to the next lowest price rate per mile supplier in ranked order, until the Order is fulfilled.

Option 2 - Lowest total cost for route

The Purchasing Body may request cost information from each of the Framework Suppliers and offer the Contract to the Framework Supplier offering the lowest total deliverable cost for the specific requirement or route.

Option 3 - Ranked list (combined score)

The Purchasing Body may use a ranking system established within the Framework based on the best combined score - quality, price and social value.

A Call-Off Contract may be awarded to the highest-ranked Operator based on the combined score that is able to meet the requirements. If the first-ranked Operator declines or is unavailable, the Purchasing Body may approach the next ranked Operator in Order.

Option 4 - Urgent Requirement

A direct award may be made where:

1. an urgent operational requirement arises;
2. a mini competition cannot be reasonably be undertaken in the time available; and
3. the urgency was not caused by the Council's own actions.

Option 5 - Award Where Only One Supplier Can Meet the Requirement

A direct award may be made where only one Framework Supplier is capable of meeting the specified operational requirement, for example due to:

- specialist vehicle needs;
- safeguarding restrictions;
- geographic availability;
- legally mandated driver qualifications or licence categories.

The Purchasing Body must record the justification where this ground is used as required under the Procurement Act 2023.

Option 6 - Direct Award for Continuity of Service

Where continuity of service is essential (e.g., vulnerable children transport), the Council

may make a direct award to the current Operator where:

1. Passengers would be adversely affected by any change in driver or provider; and/or
2. Passengers have expressed a clear preference for retaining the same driver or service provider; and/or
3. A change would cause disruption, confusion, or risk to vulnerable passengers; and or
4. Maintaining the current Operator is necessary to ensure consistent, safe and reliable service delivery.

MINI-COMPETITION

To conduct a Mini-Competition , the Purchasing Body shall:

1. Identify the Framework Agreement Operators capable of performing the Call-Off Contract for the Services;
2. Complete the Contract Particulars and supplement and refine the Call-Off Contract Terms and Conditions only to the extent permitted by the Framework Agreement or the Procurement Act 2023;
3. Invite Framework Operators to:
 - i) to submit a supplemental tender within a specified time limit, which takes into account factors such as the complexity of the subject matter of the Contract and the time needed to submit tenders; and
 - ii) keep each supplemental tender confidential until the expiry of the time limit for the receipt by it of the supplemental tenders;
 - iii) apply the Mini-Competition award criteria to any compliant Supplemental Tenders submitted through the mini-competition; and
 - iv) place an Order with the successful Operator by completing and signing the Contract Particulars.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Purchasing Body has followed the procedure set out above for a Mini Competition, the Purchasing Body may cancel, postpone, delay or end the procedure without placing an Order for Services or awarding a Contract. Nothing in the Framework Agreement obliges the Purchasing Body to place any Order for Services.

Mini-Competition Award Criteria

Under the mini-competition route the following criteria and weightings shall apply.

Purchasing Bodies may collaborate, and thus a requirement may be for an individual

Purchasing Body alone, or for multiple Purchasing Bodies.

The Purchasing Body shall determine the appropriate weighting that shall apply to their Invitation to Quote, however, the weighting must be within the ranges given.

Quality 0-60%

Social Value (included for contracts over £100k only)

0-20%

Price 40%-100%

Award method when using the framework

Either with or without competition

Contracting authorities that may use the framework

Establishing party only

Participation

Particular suitability

Lot 1. Knowsley Council

Lot 2. Rochdale Council

Lot 3. St Helens Council

Lot 4. Stockport Council

Lot 5. Tameside Council

Lot 6. Trafford Council

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

12 January 2026, 5:00pm

Submission type

Tenders

Tender submission deadline

19 January 2026, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

<https://procontract.due-north.com/>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

26 March 2026

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Quality	Quality is made up of relevant questions detailed in the documentation and social value considerations.	Quality	100%

Other information**Conflicts assessment prepared/revised**

Yes

Procedure**Procedure type**

Competitive flexible procedure

Competitive flexible procedure description

The Open Framework (the "Contract Period") is anticipated to remain in effect for a maximum duration of eight (8) years. An Open Framework is the umbrella term for a series of subsequent frameworks awarded on substantially the same terms. The timelines set out below indicate the initial, intended operation of the Framework; however, these are indicative only and may be subject to amendment at the Authority's discretion. Each period is referred to as a Framework followed by a number; this outlines the framework agreement life span before re-opening to the market for further competition. The timeline below indicates the potential for extension of each framework, but as a minimum new framework will be retendered in the 3rd year of the contract period and in the 6th.

1.1.2 Framework 1: To be established for an initial term of twelve (12) months, with the Authority reserving the right to extend the term by up to two (2) additional years, exercised in annual increments.

1.1.3 Framework 2: To operate for a fixed term of two (2) years, with the Authority reserving the right to extend the term by a further one (1) year.

1.1.4 Framework 3: To operate for a fixed term of two (2) years, with no extension provisions.

1.1.5 Those successful on each of the frameworks will be offered the opportunity to retain their existing bid for submission on the next corresponding framework, resubmit a new tender or withdraw from the future process. Note that failing to be selected from any of the frameworks does not preclude you from any of the future frameworks, but if you are successful and withdraw from the next framework but wish to join the framework after that, you will need to resubmit as you will not automatically be invited to that framework following a gap.

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://procontract.due-north.com/Procurer/Advert/AdvertSummary?projectId=e7defaf8-47cf-f011-813a-005056b64545&projectStepId=f4defaf8-47cf-f011-813a-005056b64545>

Technical specifications to be met

<https://procontract.due-north.com/Procurer/Advert/AdvertSummary?projectId=e7defaf8-47cf-f011-813a-005056b64545&projectStepId=f4defaf8-47cf-f011-813a-005056b64545>

Contracting authorities

Knowsley Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXQQ-8436-NWPV

Municipal Building, Archway Road

Huyton

L36 9YU

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD71 - East Merseyside

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Rochdale Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXXD-6682-MDRX

Number One Riverside

Rochdale

OL16 1XU

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD37 - Greater Manchester North East

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

St Helens Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PPYM-6238-VHLR

Town Hall

St Helens

WA10 1HP

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD71 - East Merseyside

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PZGW-7196-LCHL

Stopford House, Piccadilly

Stockport

SK1 3XE

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD35 - Greater Manchester South East

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PVWB-2493-LWTQ

Tameside One

Ashton under Lyne

OL6 0GS

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD35 - Greater Manchester South East

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Trafford Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PGZW-1429-QQZQ

Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road

Manchester

M32 0TH

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@star-procurement.gov.uk

Region: UKD34 - Greater Manchester South West

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government

Contact organisation

Contact Knowsley Council for any enquiries.