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Tender

School and Special Transport Open Framework

Bedford Borough Council

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Scope

Reference

C BBC CH 00001

Description

Bedford Borough Council has a statutory duty to provide free home to school travel for compulsory school-aged children who meet nationally prescribed eligibility criteria and for post-16 students who meet locally determined criteria. To fulfil this duty, the Council commissions transport services from external providers using a range of vehicle types to meet the diverse needs of routes and individual passengers. In addition, the School and Specialist Transport Team arranges transport for a range of Adult and Children's Social Care requirements, including contact sessions, day services, and respite provision. To support the efficient and compliant procurement of these services, the Council is establishing a new Open Framework to replace the existing Passenger Transport Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

The procurement process will be conducted electronically through the ADAM eProcurement System, with approved providers being eligible to participate in future call-off opportunities under the Open Framework.

The Open Framework will be divided into 6 Lots:

Lot 1 Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 1-3 passengers

Lot 2 Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 4-8 passengers

Lot 3 Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 9-16 passengers

Lot 4 Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 17-33 passengers

Lot 5 Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 49 or more passengers

Lot 6 Medical Transport Services

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)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 December 2026 to 19 March 2029
- Possible extension to 20 March 2034
- 7 years, 3 months, 20 days

Description of possible extension:

option to extend is available up to 5 years 8 months (until 30 November 2034)

Options

The right to additional purchases while the contract is valid.

The Open Framework will commence on 1 December 2026 and continue until 19 March 2029. The Council reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to extend the Open Framework on one or more occasions, provided that the total duration of the Open Framework, including all extensions, does not exceed eight (8) years from the commencement date. The Council will notify Framework Providers in writing where an extension is exercised. Route Service Agreements and other Call-Off Contracts awarded under the Open Framework may also be extended where the Open Framework is extended, provided that no Call-Off Contract continues beyond the expiry of the Open Framework. The Council also reserves the right, where permitted under the Procurement Act 2023 and as described within the procurement documents, to implement contract modifications including changes to routes, service specifications, passenger requirements, vehicle requirements, operating times, service scope, prices, payment arrangements and contract duration.

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 34110000 - Passenger cars
- 60112000 - Public road transport services
- 60120000 - Taxi services
- 60130000 - Special-purpose road passenger-transport services

- 60140000 - Non-scheduled passenger transport
- 60170000 - Hire of passenger transport vehicles with driver

Contract locations

- UKH24 - Bedford

Lot constraints

Description of how multiple lots may be awarded:

There is no limit on the number of lots that bidders can be awarded to.

Lot 1. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 1-3 passengers

Description

Provision of passenger transport services for eligible children, young people and other authorised service users using vehicles with capacity for 1 to 3 passengers. Services may include home to school transport, transport to specialist educational settings, alternative provision, social care placements, medical appointments and other Council-approved destinations. Services shall be delivered in accordance with individual Call-Off Contract requirements and may include passenger assistance, safeguarding measures and reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Lot 2. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 4-8 passengers

Description

Provision of passenger transport services for eligible children, young people and other authorised service users using vehicles with capacity for 4 to 8 passengers. Services may include shared and dedicated transport arrangements for mainstream education, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), alternative provision, social care and other commissioned services. Transport shall be provided in accordance with route specifications and Call-Off Contract requirements issued by the Council.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Lot 3. Passenger Transport Services (9-16 Passengers)

Description

Provision of passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 9 to 16 passengers. Services may include scheduled and ad hoc transport for children, young people and other authorised service users travelling to educational establishments, specialist settings, alternative provision, social care placements and other approved destinations. Services shall be provided in accordance with route specifications and service requirements set out in individual Call-Off Contracts.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Lot 4. Passenger Transport Services (17-33 Passengers)

Description

Provision of passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 17 to 33

passengers. Services may include shared transport arrangements for pupils and other authorised service users travelling to mainstream schools, specialist educational settings, alternative provision and other approved destinations. Services shall be delivered in accordance with route specifications issued by the Council and the requirements of individual Call-Off Contracts.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Lot 5. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 49 or more passengers**Description**

Provision of passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 49 or more passengers. Services may include large-capacity transport for school pupils and other authorised service users travelling to educational establishments and other approved destinations. Services shall be provided in accordance with route specifications, performance requirements and Call-Off Contract terms issued by the Council.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT

- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Lot 6. Medical Transport Services

Description

Provision of non-emergency medical transport services for eligible service users travelling to and from healthcare facilities, treatment centres, clinics and other approved medical appointments. Services may be delivered using a range of vehicle types appropriate to the needs of the passenger and may include transport for individuals with mobility, accessibility or medical requirements. Services shall be provided in accordance with individual Call-Off Contract requirements, safeguarding obligations and applicable service standards.

Lot value (estimated)

- £48,000,000 excluding VAT
- £57,600,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

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

Framework

Open framework scheme end date (estimated)

30 November 2034

Maximum number of suppliers

Unlimited

Maximum percentage fee charged to suppliers

0%

Framework operation description

This procurement establishes an Open Framework for the provision of School and Specialist Transport Services. There is no limit on the number of providers that may be admitted to the Framework, provided they satisfy the published admission requirements and evaluation criteria. The Framework will be reopened periodically during its term to allow additional providers to apply for admission. Providers admitted to the Framework may participate in future contract award procedures for transport services.

Call-Off Contracts may be awarded either by Direct Award or through a Competitive Selection Process. Direct Awards may be made where this best meets the needs of the service user and may take account of factors including service continuity, SEND compatibility, safeguarding considerations, geographical location, vehicle suitability, operational capacity, urgent transport requirements, parent or carer preference, and best value considerations. Competitive Selection Processes may include mini-competitions, electronic auctions and reverse auctions conducted through the ADAM eProcurement System, with awards made on the basis of the Most Advantageous Tender.

Prices for individual transport services will be determined at Call-Off stage. Depending on the nature of the requirement, pricing may be based on rates submitted during admission

to the Framework, direct award arrangements, negotiated route-specific pricing, or prices submitted through mini-competitions, electronic auctions or reverse auctions. Route-specific prices will be set out in the relevant Route Service Agreement. The Council may review and amend prices in accordance with the Framework Agreement, Call-Off Contract provisions and applicable procurement legislation.

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. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 1-3 passengers

Lot 2. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 4-8 passengers

Lot 3. Passenger Transport Services (9-16 Passengers)

Lot 4. Passenger Transport Services (17-33 Passengers)

Lot 5. Passenger transport services using vehicles with capacity for 49 or more passengers

Lot 6. Medical Transport Services

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

Submission

Enquiry deadline

23 September 2026, 11:59pm

Tender submission deadline

5 October 2026, 1:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

Bidders must register on the ADAM eProcurement System to access the procurement documents and submit a response. To register click on the link below.

<https://www.theaccessgroup.com/en-gb/health-social-care/software/commissioning-software/access-adam-providers-site/passenger-transport/>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

25 November 2026

Award criteria

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Price	Assessment of the tendered price submitted for the specific transport requirement. Prices will be evaluated in accordance with the award methodology set out in the Call-Off Invitation and Mini-Competition documentation. Competitive Selection Processes may be conducted through the ADAM eProcurement System and may include reverse auctions and electronic auctions.	Price	90%

Name	Description	Type	Weighting
Quality	Assessment of the Provider's quality score and service performance record maintained under the Open Framework. Quality assessments may take account of contract performance, service reliability, safeguarding compliance, operational performance, complaint management, audit outcomes and other quality factors established through the Council's quality assurance arrangements. Quality scores may be adjusted following quality audits undertaken by the Council.	Quality	10%

Other information

Description of risks to contract performance

The Authority may need to modify the Open Framework Agreement, Route Service Agreements and/or Call-Off Contracts should one or more of the following known risks materialise:

Changes to passenger numbers, passenger needs, travel care plans, SEND requirements, safeguarding requirements or medical needs requiring amendments to vehicle type, vehicle capacity, staffing levels, specialist equipment, pick-up or drop-off arrangements, route configuration or journey schedules.

Changes to educational placements, service-user placements, attendance arrangements, locations served, term dates, operating hours or other service delivery requirements affecting transport provision.

Changes in demand for transport services, including increases or reductions in service volumes, routes, journeys, passengers or geographical coverage.

Road network changes, highway works, traffic management measures, road closures, access restrictions or other transport infrastructure changes requiring amendments to routes, journey times or collection arrangements.

Changes to applicable legislation, statutory guidance, licensing requirements, safeguarding requirements, health and safety requirements, data protection obligations or transport regulations affecting the operation of the services.

The introduction of new operational, environmental, accessibility, technology or vehicle compliance requirements necessary to ensure the continued safe, effective and lawful delivery of the services.

Changes to funding arrangements, policy objectives, organisational structures or statutory duties impacting the scope, volume or delivery of the services.

Severe weather events, emergency planning requirements, public health incidents or other operational circumstances requiring temporary or permanent adjustments to service delivery arrangements.

Changes required to accommodate the periodic reopening, refresh, award, onboarding or management of suppliers admitted to the Open Framework in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.

The Authority reserves the right, where permitted under the Procurement Act 2023 and any applicable regulations, guidance or statutory instruments, to amend, modify, vary, supplement, extend, novate, replace, reduce, increase, suspend, transfer or otherwise change the Open Framework Agreement, any Route Service Agreement, any Call-Off Contract and any associated procurement or contract documentation during their respective terms.

Such modifications may be implemented through any modification mechanism expressly provided for within the procurement documents, Framework Agreement, Route Service Agreements, Call-Off Contracts or associated contract documents, or otherwise where permitted by law.

The Authority reserves the right to make modifications arising from, including but not limited to, changes in operational requirements, service delivery requirements, service-

user needs, passenger demand, legislation, statutory guidance, funding arrangements, policy, organisational structures, systems, technology, contract management requirements or any other circumstance giving rise to a lawful contract modification.

Any modification shall be undertaken in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and any other applicable legal requirements.

Applicable trade agreements

- Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Open procedure

Contracting authority

Bedford Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLCV-4616-VTHL

Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street

Bedford

MK42 9AP

United Kingdom

Email: Commercial.Hub@bedford.gov.uk

Region: UKH24 - Bedford

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government