

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: All</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> School Meals Delivery in Schools	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Director of Education and Inclusion	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Schools Forum	<b>DATE</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<p>At its meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024, an update was presented to the Schools Forum on the procurement of the new school meals contract. The current contract with Cater Link is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. A further update is now available.</p> <p>Following a successful tendering process, tenders were received on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 for a new service that is due to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 for a period of three years, with option for two extensions of one year each, with a total estimated aggregate value of £24m. The new contract will include an option to break after two years (April 2027), which will allow the Council to move to an in-house arrangement, if possible.</p> <p>The purpose of this briefing is to update Schools Forum on the outcome of the tender, which will then proceed to consideration of award by the Executive Director, Children and Learning following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families in line with the procurement strategy agreed by the Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b>  Steve Harris, Head of Facilities Management, 5 Pancras Square  <a href="mailto:steve.harris@camden.gov.uk">steve.harris@camden.gov.uk</a> / 020 7974 5651  Shola Matiluko, Contracts Performance Manager Pancras Square  <a href="mailto:shola.matiluko@camden.gov.uk">shola.matiluko@camden.gov.uk</a> / 020 7974 45185</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
The Forum is asked to note the report.	

Signed by:



Vikram Hansrani, Director of Education and Inclusion

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> December 2024

## **1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 Camden Council reported to Schools Forum throughout 2024 concerning the development of the School Meals contract and available options to the Council
- 1.2 This paper updates Schools Forum as to the arrangements for an interim contract award and sets out the Council's procurement position in December 2024

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The school meals service is a delegated service, which is procured and managed by the Council on behalf of schools on the basis of a service level agreement (SLA). The full cost of the service is financed by schools through a combination of charges to parents for paid meals and funding of free meals from their delegated budget. Whilst schools have autonomy on the use of their budgets, the Council is supporting them in securing value for money for their contracted services.
- 2.2 As a result, the Council through its procurement processes allows schools to have access to contracts at competitively tendered price and quality.
- 2.3 The current contract procured jointly with the London Borough of Islington for the initial five-year period was extended for another two years is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The current price per meal in primary, secondary, and adult meal is £2.87.
- 2.4 The Council advertised the tender on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 with a closing date of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Tenders were received, which were evaluated based on 50/50 price / quality ratio.
- 2.5 Bidders were asked to submit the labour element of the meal price based on the current labour rate, which will be uplifted by the new London Living Wage rate that is due to take place with effect from April 2025.

## **3 Tender evaluation**

- 3.1 The evaluation criteria as agreed the Cabinet was based on 50/50 price / quality ratio of which the quality element is broken down as:
  - Mobilisation and quality assurance 6%
  - Food quality and nutrition 15%
  - Sample menus 5%
  - Sustainability 3%
  - Management and staffing, and Equality and Diversity 4%

- Kitchen staffing 2%
- Stakeholder engagement 5%
- Social Value 10%

3.2 The tender process has been completed and a report setting out a recommendation to award a contract to a school meals provider is being considered by the Executive Director Children and Learning following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families

#### 4 Price

4.1 The successful tenderer's price for both primary and secondary will be within budget.

#### 5 Reasons for recommendation

5.1 The Council conducted a competitive procurement process in a market with multiple experienced providers to ensure that value for money is achieved. The balance of price and quality (50/50) aims to ensure that high quality service provision is assured, including delivery of social value measures, whilst also giving consideration to price and the financial circumstances of schools to pay for the contract. The pricing schedule included detailed numbers of meals required for each school site, and price has been assessed by comparing price per meal, per pupil for each tenderer.

#### 6 Key milestones

6.1 The following table below summarises the key tasks and activities.

Key activity date – indicative	Key tasks
By December 2024	Contract award report to be considered by Executive Director, Children and Learning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families, in line with the delegation agreed by Cabinet
December 2024	Schools Forum – Procurement report
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	Contract start date

## **7 Legal Implications (comments from the Borough Solicitor)**

- 7.1 Any potential contract award will comply with the Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 and Contract Standing Orders (CSOs). CSOs require that the Executive Director makes the Decision to award.

## **8 Environmental Impacts**

- 8.1 There are none.

## **9. Financial Comments**

- 9.1 The full cost of the service is financed by schools through a combination of charges to parents for paid meals and funding of free meals from their delegated budget. Schools are charged as per the invoiced number of meals by the contractor.
- 9.2 Schools have autonomy on the use of their budgets with the Council having a duty to assist them in securing value for money for their contracted services. As a result, the Council through its procurement processes allows schools to have access to contracts at competitively tendered price and quality.
- 9.3 Schools can be varied into or out of the contract by giving a reasonable notice.

**REPORT  
ENDS**