

**Invitation to Tender: University Shuttle Bus 2024**

**Tender reference: TRA007 LTU**

**Response Document**

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| **Question 1** | **Please describe in detail the vehicle that you will use for the Shuttle Service and describe why this vehicle is the optimum choice for the contract.** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university needs to be assured that any vehicle used for the service is fully fit for purpose and supports the university’s evolving travel and sustainability strategies. |
| The tenderer should consider | Tenderers should consider the profile and mix of potential patrons. As a minimum, tenderers should regard the requirements and expected standards we have described in the tender document “Part 6.Specification.” |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | A response that only states the make and model of vehicle will not suffice.  The response should be descriptive so that the evaluators can understand why the vehicle being proposed is the correct choice for the contract requirements. For instance, is the vehicle fully inclusive, enabling passengers that require accessibility assistance to utilise the service without inconvenience, whilst generally meeting the needs and comfort of all passengers.  Tenderers might include some details regarding the modernity of the vehicle, its performance, and how that portrays the university. Internal and external images of the vehicle may be beneficial, though only if of the actual vehicle proposed, rather than a generic image of the type of vehicle. |

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| **Question 2** | **How will you ensure the vehicle is in good order to provide the service?** |
| The university is asking this question because | The vehicle will be continually visible to the local community and will carry signage that clearly identifies it with the university. The Public will regard the vehicle to be a representative of the university. In some cases, the shuttle will be a person’s first encounter with a university service, and good impressions are vital. |
| The tenderer should consider | Inside and out, the vehicle must be clean, tidy, in good repair, and aesthetically unobjectionable. At the start of each day, the vehicle will be of pristine presentation. The contractor will be required to make every effort to ensure that the vehicle’s presentation is maintained throughout the day. |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | What inspections will you make, how often, how these are recorded, how records are used to inform the service |

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| **Question 3** | **What are your contingency plans in the event that the vehicle or driver are deemed unfit for the service?** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university makes a promise to its customers and local community that a punctual shuttle service will be provided. Assurance is needed that normal service will be resumed as quickly as possible, and consequential disruptions will be minimised with potential for customer dissatisfaction mitigated. |
| The tenderer should consider | This question carries significant weighting, and therefore the tenderer’s response should be thorough with much thought given to the potential scenarios that could disrupt the service, what the impacts might be, and how the contractor will overcome those impacts.  The tenderer should not assume that this question is exclusively about breakdown and the vehicle’s roadworthiness. The vehicle may remain roadworthy, yet become deemed unfit for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, damage to bodywork, malfunction of fixtures and fittings, trackers etc., or portrays a poor image in accordance with your daily inspections.  Consequences of vehicle failure may vary, depending on location of the vehicle at the time, for instance at the depot or on a highway. Consequences of an interrupted service may for instance see people accumulate in anticipation of the service, causing obstruction to pathways and at stopping points.  The driver may fail to report for duty which risks the running of the early ‘peak service’ or may become unwell during the course of the day, leading to a replacement driver being required, with potential for ‘next-day absence.’  In any event, prospective passengers will likely be unaware of any problems with the service, and may become disgruntled causing general dissatisfaction, which may lead to enquiries and complaints being directed to the university, whom should not be unaware of any issue with the service. |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | The tender must include a description of the proposed reporting mechanism that will be used to inform LTU of operational issues.  Actions described might include how the contractor’s management team are alerted to any issues.  It will be beneficial for tenders to describe the scenarios which will result in the recovery and/or replacement of the vehicle, or for the driver being unable to perform the service, and for each scenario describe what actions you will take, and how quickly you will perform them. The response should commit to a maximum service ‘down time’ (i.e., how long it will be before the normal service is resumed. Assurance might be provided by describing the extent and location of your fleet / personnel that is ‘on standby’ to be deployed. |

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| **Question 4** | **What corrective action will you take in the event that the timetable is not being adhered to?** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university appreciates that running to timetable can be disrupted by factors that are outside the control of the university or contractor. A clear plan of how the timetable will be back on track as soon as possible is needed. The university will want to advise patrons at the soonest possible opportunity that there will be disruption to the service. |
| The tenderer should consider | During peak times, the service is scheduled to coincide with and is at its busiest with a high dependency on rail network connections. At other times services are less frequent, but passengers will rely more on the service for their return journeys |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | The tenderer may propose that if a timed stop is missed that the next timed stop will be adhered to. Alternatively, the tenderer may propose to carry on with the service as soon as possible, hoping to make up the time. The course of action may not be the same for peak services and it would for other times of the day. In any event, the evaluators are looking to understand the rationale behind the proposed course of action. |

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| **Question 5** | **How will you monitor and record your performance against the agreed service levels?** |
| The university is asking this question because | Both university and contractor will need to measure the success of the contract. |
| The tenderer should consider | There are several key metrics that are set out in the tender document “Part 6.Specification.” These include, but are not limited to:   * Keeping to timetable * Customer satisfaction * Register of complaints/compliments * Actions and comms * Patronage profile |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | A response that simply states records will be kept is not sufficient. Tenders will benefit where a description of each service level is given, with a corresponding method of measuring performance provided. Additional assurance will be provided if frequency of measurement is stated, and detail about how the measurement is taken. |

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| **Question 6** | **Please describe the customer service training that you will provide to all operatives associated with this contract?** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university must be assured that the contractor and his staff will at all times provide a professional and customer focused service and conduct themselves accordingly. |
| The tenderer should consider | In responding to this question, the tenderer will acknowledge that:   * ‘operatives’ is not exclusively defined as drivers, and includes any staff that will be involved (either directly or indirectly) with the service, including but not limited to, account managers, call handlers, complaints teams, finance departments etc. * ‘customers’ is not defined as on-board patrons exclusively and includes but is not limited to the university’s contract management team, and any member of the general public that may interact with the contractor in relation to or incidental to the service.   Focus will naturally be on preparedness of drivers, who will, to all passengers, be the face of the university and of the contractor. Drivers are lone workers, and must characterise self-discipline to professionally represent themselves, the university, and the contractor. |
| Notes for the tenderer’s response | A tender that provides a list of available courses will not suffice. It will be beneficial for the tenderer to identify where ‘pressure points’ exist in the service (for instance, confrontational situations such as aggrieved passengers reporting late running services, or drivers encountering other road users’ “road rage,” etc.), and for the tenderer to describe how the training provided prepares operatives for such scenarios. Supporting evidence that operatives connected to the contract have undergone the training, such as course completion certificates will be well received.  If you will publish ‘customer service charter’ for your operatives to adhere with, please provide a copy with your tender, or describe what will be included. |

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| **Question 7** | **Please describe how you will be able to accommodate fluctuating passenger demand and provide alternative or additional services** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university needs assurance that the contract is futureproof, in that the appointed contractor will be able to respond to changing demand profiles, and/or mobilise additional routes without undue delay. |
| The tenderer should consider | The university has an ambitious programme of academic growth, which includes the introduction of new courses offered, thus increasing the student and staff populations.  The opening of the new City Campus in Leeds city centre, combined with the ongoing redevelopment of Horsforth campus (forecast to endure beyond the expiry of shuttle bus contract), may impact the demand profile for the shuttle service. The university strategy is firmly to invoke consistency in servicing of both campuses, and the shuttle service is no exception.  With both campuses subject to complex construction programmes, the timings and destinations for staff and students, as yet unconfirmed, will evolve at pace, and likely within the tender period for this contract. A service that continues to run later in the day is one option under consideration.  Readiness for change is not limited to having spare capacity in the vehicular fleet – there may be a need for additional drivers, or changes to processes and ‘back office’ support.  The university does not expect tenderers to be carrying spare capacity at this juncture, rather that the tenderer has a firm understanding of the impacts and is prepared to react when cause arises. |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | Tenderer’s simple confirmation that changes can be accommodated will not be sufficient.  Responses should include information that clearly describes the tenderer’s readiness to mobilise alternative or additional routes, and demonstrate that there is agility in the service provision, for example making sure the right capacity vehicle is used relative to demand etc.  It will be beneficial to provide details of your current fleet (number and types of vehicles, their sizes, ages etc.), and advise what spare capacity currently exists within the fleet.  The tenderers should advise if new vehicles will need to be acquired, and how long it will take for new vehicles to be made ready.  If additional staff will need to be recruited, which staff will this be and how long will it take to recruit and train for those positions. |

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| **Question 8** | **Please describe how you will use this contract to support the university’s sustainability strategy.** |
| The university is asking this question because | The university travel strategy will have focus on sustainability. |
| The tenderer should consider | The university is an Anchor Institution in the Leeds area. Anchor Institutions seek to use procurement processes to deliver social value, e.g., for communities, employees, and the environment.  The relationship between fuel consumption and carbon emissions is a high priority for this contract.  Procurement rules do not allow us to exclude operators based upon their location, but the ‘travel to’ miles and the consequential environmental impact can be assessed. This will include distance from depot to service location, distance to refuelling point, distance travelled by staff in order to get to work.  Delivery miles should also be considered – this means supporting local economy wherever possible for the things you consume as a business.  Social value Includes fair pay and conditions for workers, covering points such as the real living wage, skills/progression, and good employment practice.  Sustainability extends beyond back office operations. |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | Although an objective of the Travel Strategy, this question is not about encouraging patrons to use the service thus discouraging them from using private vehicles.  Tenders will benefit if they describe initiatives that will be implemented in this contract, with regard to fuel efficiency, carbon measurement, management, and reduction.  Responses could describe how far operatives have to travel to get to work, how many miles are travelled from garage to contract start, or where refuelling of the vehicle happens, relative to your depot or the service.  Tenders could include details on how operatives will be rewarded and how good performance is incentivised.  What events and social improvement initiatives are you involved with now, or will become involved with within the duration of the contract? |

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| **Question 9** | **Please propose your Health and Safety Policy and provide Risk Assessment for the service in-operation.** |
| The university is asking this question because | The specification requires the operator to provide assurance that passengers will be kept safe during the operation of the service. |
| The tenderer should consider | The driver’s responsibility for passenger conduct, |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | This question does not ask about general H&S policy, nor does it impinge upon the safety inspections covered elsewhere in this tender or obligated as part of retaining the bus operator license. The tenderer needs to propose what items will be covered in this policy, which does not need to be the finished article, but suggestions will be binding – do not suggest things if you have no way of implementing them. |

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| **Question 10** | **Please describe how will you gather and present evidence in support of your Open Book pricing** |
| The university is asking this question because | Transparency in pricing is key to the partnership approach that this contract should promote. The university needs to be assured that it is paying a fair price, and that the price allows for fair payment of the contractor’s staff. |
| The tenderer should consider | The evidence will be called upon in the event that any application for a price increase is made by the contractor. Automatic increases will not be accepted – all applications for a price increase must be justified with supporting evidence provided.  Direct costs that need to be measured include but are not limited to:   * Salary (introduction of £11.44 minimum wage) * Fuel (pay at pump) * Miles per day * Miles per litre   How will you respond to falling costs, for instance price at pump? |
| Notes to assist the tenderer’s response | Provide an account, detailing the cost to serve (split between direct and indirect costs) and including a set margin for profit. Tenders will benefit if the method of measurement is described, and frequency of measure given. Rationale supporting these choices will be well received. |

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