

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 10 March 2022	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education
<b>Report title:</b>		Adventure Play Services grants extension 2022/23	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		Camberwell Green and Champion Hill wards	
<b>From:</b>		Head of Culture	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education agrees the proposed new commissioning framework for the revenue funding of service delivery from the council owned adventure play sites at Dog Kennel Hill and Bethwin Road.
2. That as part of this new commissioning framework, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education approves the extension of existing grants to currently commissioned adventure play service providers, Bethwin Road Playground Association and Dog Kennel Hill AP Ltd, to the value of £30,963 each (total £61,926) for a period of 12 months from 01 April 2022 to 30 March 2023.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Adventure playgrounds are a specific type of playground usually aimed at older primary school children. They are fenced outdoor play spaces, defined by the presence of large challenging timber play structures that offer elements of risk, exploration and experimental play usually under the supervision of professional play staff.
4. Adventure playgrounds emerged in the UK in the post war era, particularly in London after the blitz, with the appropriation of old bomb sites and disused construction land to provide managed creative play spaces set aside for children in an increasingly industrialised urban landscape. From the 1950s adventure playgrounds steadily grew in popularity until the late 1980s, when the introduction of robust new safety laws and innovation in the production of standardised metal framed equipment prompted design trends towards brightly coloured playground kit and open access play areas.
5. The council directly manages five adventure playgrounds in Southwark:
  - Mint Street
  - Surrey Docks
  - Ellen Brown Centre

- Fredericks
  - Peckham Rye
6. Alongside this council run provision there are two further adventure playgrounds owned by Southwark, managed by third sector organisations and supported financially through the council's previous Youth and Play Grants scheme.
- Bethwin Road: offer free, drop in supervised play sessions for 6 -16 year olds afterschool and holidays. A chargeable local school collection is available.
  - Dog Kennel Hill: offers free, drop in supervised plays sessions for 5-15 year olds afterschool and holidays.

### Bethwin Road

7. Bethwin Adventure Playground is located at 3-5 Bethwin Road in Camberwell. Burgess Park is just under 200m on the other side of Camberwell Road.
8. The 1,350sqm site comprises a ground floor community room and traditional adventure play equipment outside. Registered charity Bethwin Road Neighbourhood Playground Association manages the site under a 25 lease expiring in 2038.
9. There are eight play areas in the ward, including those in parks, housing estate playgrounds and sports court, the playgrounds closest to Bethwin are the two situated within Burgess Park less than 400m away. The closest adventure playground is at Fredericks Adventure Playground in just over 1km walking distance away.
10. The council has agreed to invest in this playground through a £300k capital programme to repair/ replace play equipment and safety surfacing identified as defective in play inspection report. In addition, the council is negotiating section 106 capital investment in the playground with a local developer to improve the Bethwin building – this may be in the form of extensions or replacement.

### Dog Kennel Hill

11. The Dog Kennel Hill Adventure Playground is a 4,000sqm site located on the A2216 Dog Kennel Hill road. Activity sessions run each weekday after school from 3-6pm and during school holidays from 9-5pm.
12. The site comprises a timber framed single storey adventure play centre built in the 1970s. The building has a main hall, craft room, kitchen, office and two toilets. The playground features a stretch of old wooden platforms, walkways and bridges at varying levels together with three pieces of recently installed outdoor gym equipment. It is run by registered charity Dog

Kennel Hill AP Ltd., who occupy it on a tenancy at will, and is staffed by qualified and experienced play workers, supported by volunteers.

13. There are only four playgrounds in the ward but the playground in Ruskin Park in Lambeth is nearest to the site at 800 meters away. The closest adventure playground to Dog Kennel Hill is at Peckham Rye Park, which is over 2km away.
14. The council has agreed a £600k capital investment programme, which will be matched by Dog Kennel Hill AP Ltd. own fundraising. This capital investment will be used to remove and replace all the timber structures, play equipment and safety surfacing identified as defective, re-landscape the site and install modern robust timber play equipment and deliver a play building that is fit for purpose, structurally sound, safety compliant, energy efficient and sustainable in the long term, through either refurbishment or new construction.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

15. Each organisation receives £30,963 annual revenue grant from the council to cover the cost of delivering the adventure play services. Most recently, this funding was allocated from the Youth and Play grants which are coming to an end in March 2022 and have been replaced by the Positive Futures for Young People Fund (PFYPF) Programme, which launched in 2021 receiving 103 applications with 21 being recommended for funding.
16. The commissioning model for the delivery of both adventure playground services has historically relied on a variety of funding streams. In recent years both organisations had to apply, in competition with wider youth related services, with no ring fenced allocation for Adventure Play provision.
17. If this approach continues going forward, it will mean that there is a real risk of their applications not being successful and service delivery being interrupted or jeopardised.
18. Given the commitment the council has made to provision from both sites - by way of both granting a long term lease in the case of Bethwin AP and significant capital investment in the case of both Bethwin AP and DKH AP - officers recommend that both services are allocated ring fenced annual revenue grants agreed alongside a number of quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets in line with those reported on by council run Adventure Playgrounds, as well as financial reporting.
19. The extension of these grants would then be reviewed annually alongside the performance indicators for each service. This would provide more sustainability and certainty to the funded organisations as well as more robust service delivery monitoring arrangements.
20. The proposed KPIs the providers will report on as part of the grant agreement are:

- A daily count of attendees divided into gender and age (for both term time and holiday programme) with reports on quarterly number of young people who have used the facility and number of visits
  - Number and type of group activities delivered and total attendance
  - Site closures due to sickness and staff shortages
21. Year 1 of this arrangement (2022/23) will be used to set a baseline on the above KPIs with targets agreed from 2023/24 onwards.
22. As part of the grant agreement both providers will report mid-year and at the end of the year on their income and expenditure.

### **Policy framework implications**

23. Last Year the council agreed the Youth New Deal to raise the profile of services in Southwark so that no young person is left behind and to ensure young people's voices at the heart of service delivery. It was the culmination of months of engagement with young people including an extensive Youth Review, which consulted over 500 mostly young people.
24. The Youth New Deal also link to the 'Southwark Together' commitment which promises to *'Commit to root out inequalities by implementing the recommendations from the Southwark Stands Together work against racial inequalities and injustice.'*
25. The extension of these two grants and proposal for a more sustainable and fair approach to the commissioning of adventure play services is directly linked to the council's commitment to a 'Fairer Future for all', in particular:
- 'We want all children and young people in the borough to grow up in a safe, healthy and happy environment where they have the opportunity to reach their potential.'*
26. The refreshed Borough Plan 2020-22 sets out a series of commitments across eight themes, one of which is 'A great start in life'. Southwark has committed to:
- 'Invest in young people in Southwark, ensuring our youth services meet their needs and giving them a stronger voice in decisions which affect them.'*
- 'Mainstream the Positive Future For Young People Fund (PFYPF) so that every generation of young people can benefit from this investment.'*
27. The objectives will also follow the 'common purpose common cause' outcomes as detailed in Southwark's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2017- 2022:
- Better partnership working to improve outcomes for residents

- Improved commissioning and grant-giving to focus on outcomes and be more collaborative, and community-led
- More resilient communities that are connected and more resourceful.
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## **Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts**

### **Community impact statement**

28. This report proposes the continuation of an existing service therefore the recommendations set out within it will have no adverse impact on the community, nor do they disadvantage any equalities group or protected characteristic. Quite to the contrary it will allow the council to continue delivering positive outcomes for young people.

### **Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement**

29. Bethwin APG is in the Camberwell Green Ward. 14,770 residents live in the ward with children making up over 22% of its population. Camberwell Green has one of borough's highest percentage of children at both reception age and in year 6 that are overweight. Of the seven APG neighbourhoods, Camberwell Green has by far the largest Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population at over 60%.
30. DKH APG is in Champion Hill ward which has 10,760 residents. The age profile of the ward is relatively young with children making up 21.5% of the population. The ward has a slightly lower percentage of children living in households claiming out of work benefits than the Southwark average.
31. Adventure playgrounds provide positive activities for young people aged 5 to 16 years old.

### **Health impact statement**

32. Access to adventure play facilities and related activities and workshops will contribute towards addressing health inequalities experienced by children and especially young people, particularly around mental health.
33. The service will afford children and young people opportunities to become active members of their community, fulfill their potential, improve their development, access to safe outdoor spaces and physical activity which is highly beneficial for physical and mental health and plays a key role in wellbeing. This will lead to higher levels of happiness, boost self-confidence and self-esteem and help connect with others.

### **Climate change implications**

34. The delivery of services referred to in this report has the potential, like most other service delivery activity, for carbon emissions linked to those activities (i.e. lighting, heating, transport, etc.).

35. Officers will encourage both providers to develop and implement sustainability policies that align with the council's climate emergency priorities, as outlined in the council's Climate Strategy.
36. Officers will also ensure that the capital investment programme adopts carbon neutral and renewable energy approaches wherever possible.

### **Legal implications**

37. Please see the concurrent report of the Director of Law and Governance.

### **Finance implications**

38. Cost of the recommendation is £61,926.
39. There is no specific budget available to pay for this cost. However, the costs of this recommendation will be met from existing Youth Service business unit's revenue budgets.
40. The overall expenditure incurred against the scheme will be monitored and reported as part of the routine revenue monitoring regime.
41. Staffing and any other costs connected with this contract will be contained within existing Culture Division revenue budgets.

### **Consultation**

42. In March and July 2021 officers expanded on last year's youth review consultation by conducting an additional online survey, which was circulated to secondary school pupils in Southwark. This ensured that the Youth New Deal commitment, requiring the council to commission activities and programmes that are informed and shaped by young people's voices, was met.
43. 374 young people responded to the survey. Young people were asked which physical activities, personal development activities, wellbeing activities and workshops/courses they would like to take part in the most. Adventure Play featured as one of those priorities chosen by participants in the consultation.
44. Officers have consulted with both providers on the proposed KPIs and both organisations have indicated they would be willing and able to provide quarterly reports on that basis.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS**

### **Director of Law and Governance**

45. This report seeks approval of a proposed new commissioning framework for the delivery of adventure play opportunities from the council owned adventure

play sites at Dog Kennel Hill and Bethwin Road, and approval to extend grant funding for a period of 12 months from 1 April 2022 to Dog Kennel Hill AP Ltd and Bethwin Road Playground Association who currently provide the services at those sites.

46. The decisions to agree service plans in relation to their areas of responsibility and to approve the extension of grant funding are expressly reserved to the Cabinet Member under Part 3D of the council Constitution.
47. Paragraphs 17 to 22 explain that the proposal to allocate ring fenced annual revenue grants will include the introduction of certain quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators and monitoring and reporting requirements in order to be consistent with the regime which operates in council run adventure playgrounds.
48. The continued funding of the Dog Kennel Hill and Bethwin Road play sites is consistent with relevant corporate policy and strategy and will assist the council to fulfil its statutory obligations, which include the Public Sector Equality Duty prescribed by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (EL21/140)**

49. This report seeks the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education to agree the proposed new commissioning framework for the revenue funding of service delivery from the council owned adventure play sites at Dog Kennel Hill and Bethwin Road and approves the extension of existing grants to currently commissioned adventure play service providers, Bethwin Road Playground Association and Dog Kennel Hill AP Ltd, to the value of £30,963 each (total £61,926) for a period of 12 months from 01 April 2022 to 30 March 2023.
50. The Strategic Director of Finance and Governance notes that the costs associated with this report will be fully contained within Youth Service business unit’s revenue budgets, as mentioned in financial implications.
51. Staffing and any other costs connected with this contract will need to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Youth Service Review Cabinet Report December 2020	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Eva Gomez 020 7525 4276
<a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6664&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&amp;MId=6664&amp;Ver=4</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Toni Ainge, Director of Leisure	
<b>Report Author</b>	Eva Gomez, Head of Culture	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	10 February 2022	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Governance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
List other officers here	N/A	N/A
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	9 March 2022	