

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 16 March 2015	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Children and Schools
Report title:		Commissioning Youth Provision 2015/17	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the 2015-17 commissioning allocations recommended in Appendix 1 be approved by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
2. That the Strategic Director of Children's and Adults' Services monitor progress and retain the right to withhold funding from recipient organisations if they should fail to meet the council's funding conditions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The 2008-2011 'More for Young People to Do' commissioning programme, as agreed by council assembly on 29 February 2008, ended on 30 April 2012.
4. On 13 December 2011, cabinet agreed to reconfigure the delivery arrangements for the youth service, to a) give effect to the council assembly decision on 22 February 2011 to achieve budget savings of £1.5m in this area and b) reach more of Southwark's teenagers (the existing youth service reaches only around 20%) in a way that complements externally provided provision and makes best use of the expertise in the voluntary sector. While demonstrating the council's commitment to continue funding non-statutory youth provision, the decision requires the council to think differently about how it provides services, to ensure limited resources are put to best use and have the biggest positive impact on young people's opportunities.
5. At the time of the December decision, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated: "The council's aim is to create a service that better provides what young people want and need – to create a youth service that gives young people experiences that could, for some of them, be positively 'life-changing'. The new delivery arrangements will provide a youth service that can help unlock young people's potential, by providing a variety of accessible, affordable, high quality, attractive and well-publicised activities that develop the aspirations and technical and relationship skills that they need to succeed in life. The youth service will work with young people – and their families – in a way that delivers social justice, tackles disadvantage and embraces and celebrates cultural diversity."
6. Southwark's voluntary sector youth provision was previously funded on the basis of historical funding, without robust assessment of existing need, impact or value for money. The Cabinet decision included agreement to decommission activities that are not high quality, fit for purpose or meeting need, and move voluntary

sector provision to new commissioning arrangements which maximise the sector's expertise, increase value for money and reduce duplication.

7. Of the total 2014/15 youth service budget of £2.2 million – which is higher than the national average – £420,000 will be spent on newly commissioning providers in the community and voluntary sector. The remainder will be spent on council-run provision and existing contracts. This report concerns only the £400,000 to be spent on new commissioning of providers.
8. A 2012/13 commissioning strategy was developed. Providers and young people have been involved throughout its development, which has also been supported by a wide-ranging needs analysis at ward and community council area across a range of factors including age, gender, ethnicity, and levels of teenage conception, youth offending, and being not in education, employment or training (NEET), as well as educational attainment, and levels of disability, deprivation and children in need.
9. Applications for the 2015-17 commissioning programme were advertised in February 2015, with 33 applications received.
10. The assessment process covered the following stages:
 - Assessment of the organisation, its structure, quality assurance systems, staff development, and management arrangements
 - Screening out of those applications which did not meet minimum requirements or had incomplete application forms.
 - Assessment of how the application met the commissioning criteria; this stage was completed by a young peoples panel facilitated by a member of staff.
 - Financial health check
 - Shortlisting against priority commissioning criteria, including location in high-need areas, whether provision duplicated existing activity, whether provision was innovative, and accessibility at weekends and evenings
11. It is proposed that the successful applicants are funded from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2017. This represents a change from the preceding three financial years when we have limited awards to a single year. The change to a multi-year award was driven by:
 - Conversations with voluntary sector partners, including Community Action Southwark (CAS), in the preceding three years where they indicated unanimous preference for the stability and reputational enhancement local authority provides. This is seen as a significant asset in helping to attract third party match funding.
 - The needs of the service, delivering efficiencies by freeing up a limited back office resource to do more qualitative work, e.g. scrutinising returns data, visiting providers, ensuring we are receiving good value for money.
12. Balancing the above benefits we also acknowledge the risks presented by offering a multi-year award, specifically, uncertainty over budgetary constraints beyond 1 April 2016. A substantial part of the dialogue with VCS partners was to reach consensus on how to balance their desire for longer award periods with the council's need to protect itself from risk of reputational damage and financial claims by unilaterally ceasing funding. We have reached a compromise

agreement where providers agreed that we insert a break clause in the agreement, which will enable the Council to cease funding after having given appropriate notice to the providers in writing.

13. The council has made a commitment to giving young people more power over the youth service budget. In addition to the involvement above, young people had input to the proposals agreed in February, through a youth focus group.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

14. The 2015-17 commissioning plan supports the youth service's core objectives to:
 - Improve young people's life chances and reduce antisocial behaviour, youth offending and teenage conceptions
 - Provide opportunities for young people's personal and social development
 - Ensure sufficient leisure and educational provision for 13-19 year olds
 - Increase local young people's participation with the service to 25%
 - Ensure young people have real power over 20% of the youth service budget (on-going from 2014)
 - Deliver a service that is fair, high quality, meets young people's needs and makes best use of resources, including providing a universal service that is open to all as well as targeted support for young people with additional needs
 - Have mix of council and voluntary sector provision, each focused on what they do best
 - Deliver a service that is underpinned by robust needs analysis, smarter commissioning and quality assurance processes
15. The strategy also supports the development of the new delivery arrangements set out in the December 2011 Cabinet report, which has been operational since April 2012. The new model creates a network of council and commissioned provision arranged around locality hubs, with each hub delivering universal activities and additional support from a wide range of young people services. The recommendations in this report cover the commissioning of external providers only, and so represent only one part of the offer to the borough's young people.
16. A hub's central feature is that it is more than a building – it is the focus of the community, and will provide the infrastructure to link a diversity of providers to create an integrated 'youth offer' underpinned by a robust needs analysis, which used the criteria set out in paragraph 8. Each hub is a base for 'spokes' of outreach workers who work in the surrounding streets and local communities to attract young people into the building. Spokes are also links to community venues or commissioned providers as well as other young people facilities such as those provided by the play or leisure service.
17. The hubs are located across to borough to ensure the youth service that all parts of the borough are reached, including those areas which have historically been under-represented.
18. These delivery arrangements employ a twin approach of commissioning borough-wide provision alongside targeted investment in the areas identified through the needs analysis as having greater need. This ensures broad coverage as well as seeking to increase the levels of participation among young people with additional needs.

19. The providers recommended for funding will offer a mix of open-access and targeted provision, as national and local policy recognises the value in providing open-access provision as a way to engage all young people, particularly those who may go on to access targeted or specialist support. Consequently, approximately 75 per cent of the provision recommended for funding will provide open-access activity and support, and it is to be noted that, unlike many councils, Southwark is retaining a universal youth service delivered by council and voluntary sector partners.
20. Over the duration of the grants, the youth service will be working closely with its commissioned partners to develop smarter commissioning arrangements which include the development of contract specifications and quality assurance processes to take effect from April 2015. This transition will include working with voluntary sector partners to ensure commissioned provision has maximum positive impact on outcomes and complements the new delivery arrangements from April 2015. The provision of monitoring information to enable the development of robust quality assurance processes will be required for all organisations in receipt of grant funding.

Policy implications

21. The 2015-17 commissioning plan is aligned with existing strategic policy frameworks.
22. The involvement of young people in developing the commissioning strategy also supports the service's commitment to ensure young people have control over 20% of the youth service budget from 2014.

Community and equality impact statement

23. Resident feedback on council services consistently rates facilities for youth services as the most important priority to 'get right'. This feedback is complemented by the views of children and young people, who consistently say their top priorities are the provision of targeted work for the most vulnerable young people alongside high-quality, universally available youth provision. These views have underpinned the 2015-17 commissioning strategy and the proposals outlined in this report will ensure that the youth service is able to offer more higher-quality provision that more young people will want and be able to access.
24. The reach and take-up of all commissioned provision will be monitored closely over the coming year to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved. It is intended that young people will be involved in developing and delivering these quality assurance processes.
25. Looking at particular protected characteristics, historically girls have been under-represented as youth service users, accounting for around 40% of attendances at commissioned provision in 2011-12 compared to 58% of the secondary population, according to the 2011 January school census. The 2015-17 commissioning strategy will look to address this through funding provision that – considered as a whole – as appealing to girls and boys and focuses more on universal provision opened to all.
26. The ethnic make-up of young people attending youth provision in 2014/15 broadly reflected the secondary population.

27. All the organisations supported under this grant programme are required to provide monitoring information that demonstrates their commitment to inclusion. In particular, all organisations will be required to provide information on the ethnicity and gender of their participants and staff.

Financial implications CS0239/NA

28. This report is seeking approval for the 2015-16 commissioning allocations detailed in Appendix 1. The total allocation of £400 will be funded from the 2015/16 Youth Service budget allocation of £400k for grant commissioning. The second year funding will be subject to agreed cabinet budget for 2016-17.

Legal implications

29. As set out in the supplementary advice below.

Consultation

30. The youth service has conducted wide-ranging consultations to underpin the development of its new arrangements, including the 2015-17 commissioning plan. This included a workshop independently facilitated by the National Youth Agency (NYA) in 2013 for young people, staff, members, professionals and providers which looked at what the borough's youth services could look like.
31. Following this workshop, the service further consulted young people – both users and non-users of the service – about what design principles should underpin the future service model. Meetings have also taken place with a selection of voluntary sector providers which have both endorsed the strategy and assured the authority that there is both the capacity and will within the sector to support the delivery of the new arrangements.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

32. This report seeks approval of proposed grant funding allocations for new service providers as part of the youth service commissioning programme for 2015-16.
33. The decision to approve the report recommendations is one which is expressly reserved to the Cabinet Member under the provisions of Part 3D of the council's Constitution. The report confirms that the proposed distribution of grant funding is consistent with corporate policy and objectives.
34. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single public sector equality duty (PSED). This duty requires the Council to have due regard in its decision making processes to the need to :
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and

those that do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to (a) above.

35. The council is required to act in accordance with the equality duty and have due regard to the duty when carrying out its functions, which includes making decisions in the current context.
36. The report refers to the need for delivery arrangements for the youth service to be reconfigured following a decision by the Council Assembly to achieve budget savings. As part of the process for deciding how the reduction in funding is to be implemented within the context of a new commissioning strategy, it is necessary to prepare robust equalities impact assessments or equality analysis in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 in accordance with good practice at critical stages as proposals in relation to spending reductions are made which identify the potential or actual effects the spending reduction could have in respect of disability, gender, race and religion or belief, sexual orientation, age and human rights.
37. The report advises that equalities have been considered and assessed during the analysis of feedback received from young people who have taken part in the youth service activities. In developing the recommendations in accordance with Southwark's approach to equality steps have been put in place to mitigate negative impact in accordance with good practice.
38. The equality duty requires public bodies to have an adequate evidence base for our decision making; consultation/engagement is a useful tool to provide an adequate evidence base. Case law has shown how important it is for public bodies to consult/engage to ensure that we understand the impact our decisions have on our community. In addition the "Southwark Compact" agreement between statutory agencies and voluntary, community and faith organisations in Southwark notes that such consultation can inform decision making.
39. The report confirms that consultation has been undertaken with the voluntary sector to ascertain their views and assist with developing a reconfigured programme in accordance with good practice. Paragraph 22 indicates the Council's intention to develop robust contractual documentation in order to enable better monitoring and management of quality and outcomes in the future, and the Director of Legal Services will advise and assist officers as required in the development of appropriate conditions which will confirm and record the Council's requirements for each funded project. These will include the ability to withhold or withdraw funding in certain prescribed circumstances (for example, where a provider has committed a substantial breach of the funding conditions) and a "break" clause as described within paragraph 12.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (CS0209/AN)

40. Comments are as per the body of the report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
2015-17 Youth Commissioning Plan	Youth Service, Children's and Adults' Services, 160 Tooley Street SE1 2QH	Andrew Alleyne (Commissioning Officer), 020 7525 2864

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	2015-17 grants allocations
Appendix 2	Unsuccessful applications

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Merril Haeusler, Director of Children's Services, Education	
Report Author	Pat Shelley, Head of Youth Services	
Version	Final	
Dated	13 March 2015	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Head of Procurement	Yes	No
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	13 March 2015	