

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 7 December 2022
Executive – 14 December 2022

Subject: Youth, Play & Participation Service (YPPS) Grants Framework
1st July 2023 to 31st March 2025

Report of: Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods

Summary

This report follows on from the update on the Youth and Play Commissioning Arrangements which was presented to Executive on 20 October 2021. The report to Executive set out an alternative delivery model to be designed and developed following the decision to transfer responsibility for commissioning from Young Manchester. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the outcome from the design and development work and to set out the proposed Youth, Play and Participation Service's commissioning process and framework including timescales for the implementation of the proposed new arrangements.

Recommendations

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and endorse the recommendation to The Executive.

The Executive recommended to

- 1) Consider and agree the report and the proposed new commissioning framework.
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Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Funded providers are expected to directly deliver activities to help achieve the Council's zero carbon agenda and to make Manchester 'a healthy, green, socially just city where everyone can thrive'.

The recommendations set out will enable the Council to directly influence grants decisions to ensure that they make the strongest possible contribution to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

Equality impact assessments will be carried out in relation to the revised Grants Programme arrangements and any associated staffing and structural changes.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Through the city's varied youth & play offer, young people have opportunities and access to activities which contribute towards their personal, social and economic wellbeing. The new grants arrangements will enable the Council to develop and strengthen local partnerships to create opportunities for our children and young people to learn, be active and have fun in their free time.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Through the city's varied youth & play offer young people have opportunities to develop their life skills to succeed in education and employment, and have opportunities to increase aspirations, achieve and gain economic independence. The new grants arrangements will continue to support children and young people have opportunities to develop key skills for life which include communication, problem solving, teamwork, self-belief, and self-management. A key focus of the grants programme will be enabling children and young people to strengthen their skills for life.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Children and young people have opportunities which enable them to think progressively and build resilience underpinned by the principles of equality and acceptance, the curriculum for youth work and the play principles. The new grants arrangements will ensure that children and young people have access to good quality youth and play provision within their neighbourhoods which encourages a sense of belonging, develops their identity and ensures their voices are heard.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Children and young people have opportunities to live, lead and enjoy safe, active, and healthy lives. Engagement with children and young people will ensure that they understand the impact they can make within their neighbourhoods, and the wider community. The new grants arrangements will place a sharper emphasis on this to ensure that children and young people are supported by providers to make the strongest possible contribution to achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.

<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>Children and young people are listened to, valued and connected across their neighbourhoods, the city and beyond via residential and exchanges. They will inform continuous improvement and will be involved in service design, delivery, and governance. Children and young people receive the support they need to participate, ensuring representation of the full diversity of local people, and those who may not otherwise have a voice.</p>
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Financial Consequences – Revenue

The Council currently grants annual funding of £1.6m to Manchester’s voluntary and community sector (VCS) to deliver youth, play and participation services. It was proposed and agreed in 2021 that the City Council will administer the budget going forward, and that the budget will remain unchanged. The proposals set out in this report seeks to protect the current levels of investment and to direct those funds in line with the proposed new commissioning arrangements as set out in the main body of the report.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital financial consequences arising as a result of these proposals.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting:

- Children’s Scrutiny Committee Report – 13 October 2021
- Valuing Young People’s Strategy 2016-2019

- Our Manchester Youth Strategy 2019-2023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The current commissioning programme which was transferred from Young Manchester to the City Council on the 1st April 2022 finishes on the 31st of March 2023. Since transitioning youth and play commissioning from Young Manchester, several deliverables have been actioned including:

- 1 year transitional arrangements have been agreed and activated.
- The Area youth partnerships have been strengthened.
- Young people have been engaged in commissioning decisions and informing the priorities
- A series of listening sessions have been delivered to inform the new model of delivery.

2.0 Background

2.1 On the 17th of March 2021, Executive Committee agreed several actions to build stronger and more effective arrangements for youth and play services to improve the outcomes for children and young people. Executive agreed to the principle of developing an alternative delivery model and that the full implications would be presented back for determination.

2.2 The Youth and Play Commissioning Arrangements was presented to Executive on 20 October 2021. The report set out the principles of an alternative delivery model and the need to establish a revised Commissioning Framework to be designed and developed.

2.3 Since April 2022, the Youth, Play and Participation service have been developing the Commissioning Framework. In the first instance, the service engaged with sector leaders in all parts of the city through a series of 8 listening conversations. This was followed up by having similar conversations with practitioners and young people.

2.4 The feedback from these listening conversations informed the next stage of developing the commissioning framework. A group of sector leaders and practitioners were invited to co-create and co-design the commissioning framework along with officers from the service.

2.5 The proposed framework has also allowed individuals (leaders, practitioners and young people) an opportunity to share their thoughts and views through an online survey.

3.0 Strategic National and Local Context

3.1 Statutory guidance states local authorities have a statutory duty to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people, and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer'. This is often referred to as the 'youth service duty'. This includes youth and play work and other provision that:

- 'Connects young people with their communities
- Offers young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of activities
- Supports the personal, social and economic development of young people
- Improves young people's physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing
 - Raises young people's aspirations, builds their resilience, and informs their decision-making.'

[The Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) 2019]

3.2 The recent Youth Review published in February 2022 highlights DCMS acknowledging the youth sector has faced challenges throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and the UK government is responding by wanting to make a significant impact by 2025 by wanting to achieve the following:

- A Youth Guarantee: by 2025, every young person will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities.
- Three strategic aims
 - "Levelling up" and expanding access to youth provision with £560 million investment over the next three years (delivered via Youth Investment Fund, over 30 VCS providers from Manchester have expressed an interest)
 - Supporting the youth sector workforce.
 - Listening to young people's voices.

3.3 Several local strategies to ensure specific needs and priorities are interlinked in key areas of development for children and young people, these range from Manchester's Children & Young People's Plan, Community Safety Partnership – Our Strategy to the Young Carers Strategy, the Warm Spaces Agenda and many more.

3.4 Successfully funded VCS providers will plan and link the local and national priorities in their delivery of varied services. Local Authority officers, young ambassadors and staff from the VCS will monitor, quality assure and measure impact on children and young people in order for the Council to achieve local agendas and fulfil its statutory 'youth service duty.'

4.0 Principles of Investment

4.1 Following the extensive engagement, it is proposed that the following five principles are used to inform future funding decisions and to ensure that equitable, strengthened services are being delivered across the city:

4.2.1 **Diverse organisations** - It is proposed that a wide range of diverse organisations are funded to encourage participation from all parts of the city and for the benefit of all young people. There will be a strong emphasis on encouraging new and diverse groups to engage in the process. Where possible we will ensure that groups that have not been funded previously are

supported to apply for funding. It is anticipated that this will provide a more equitable sector and will enable us to reach more practitioners and importantly young people.

- 4.2.2. **Capacity building** – a key aim will be to build capacity across the sector so that groups and organisations can become sustainable. It is anticipated that lead partners will be identified in each area to provide guidance and support across the network. Their responsibility will be to ensure groups and organisations are supported with capacity building, with the support of the Youth and Play team.
- 4.2.3. **Increase youth voice** – we are looking for proposals that involve young people and demonstrate how the voices of children and young people have informed plans and activities. It is proposed that young people will also help assess applications.
- 4.2.4. **Evidence of need and impact** – proposals that can evidence clear need in a neighbourhood or for a particular group of young people will be prioritised. This includes demonstrating impact and tracking the journey of their young people.
- 4.2.5 **Workforce Development** – proposals that increase the quality and the skills of volunteer and employees supporting the sector. This will be supported by the development of a workforce development strategy.
- 4.3. **Operating Model** – It is proposed that future commissioning decisions are aligned to the 1:3:13:32 operating model for the city as appropriate. This will ensure that commissioning decisions can best integrate with other services that are operating on the geographic footprints.

5.0 Governance and decision-making processes

5.1 It is proposed that there will be five stages to the decision-making process:

- 5.1.1. Expression of interest – all organisations will need to evidence that they can meet our due diligence process which will consist of, but not limited to governing document (constitution, articles of association, etc.), safeguarding policy (including your named safeguarding lead), equal opportunities, financial overview, and then the main submission.
- 5.2.2. Young people's advisory panel – 3 – 5 young people (in each district) will have overview of and provide feedback / guidance on applicant's responses related to young people's engagement and involvement. This feedback will inform the final decision-making process.
- 5.2.3. Members advisory panel – between 3 – 5 elected members (in each district) will have overview of and provide feedback / guidance on applicant's responses related to wider community engagement and involvement. This feedback will inform the final decision-making process.

- 5.2.4. Officer recommendation – it is proposed recommendations will be prepared by officers from the service, namely the Head of Service, the Commissioning Manager and the Quality Assurance, Impact and Monitoring Lead. Officers will rely on feedback from young people and elected members in order to make the most informed recommendations.
- 5.2.5. Ratification – the Executive Member for Early Years, Children, Young People, the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and the Head of Libraries, Galleries, Culture and Youth will complete the decision-making process.

6.0 Funding

- 6.1 The total amount of funding available for commissioning will be £1.6 million.
- 6.2. The additional investment funding will be retained to support projects identified throughout the year and will include Our Year Legacy work. The money will also be used to invest in training, development and capacity building.
- 6.3. The four hubs across the city will continue to receive funding enabling them to continue their work with children and young people in specific areas of the city.

7.0 Timeline

- 7.1 It is proposed that the following timeline is agreed:

Stage 1: Launch

- The programme opens for applications from 12 noon on the 5th of January 2023 however the commissioning framework will be launched on the 21st of December 2022
- Grant information events, workshops and meet the funders session will take place between the 5th of January with the final one taking place on or around Monday the 20th of February – more information on these events will be provided soon.

Stage 2: Application period

- Online application can be submitted from Thursday the 5th of January until midnight on Sunday the 26th of February.

Stage 3: Due Diligence

- Officers from service will review all applicants' policies and procedures as soon as applications are received.

Stage 4: Decision-making and grant award

- The grant making board will meet and assess applications from Monday 27th of February.

- All organisations will be contacted by no later than Wednesday 15th of March with an outcome. Grant confirmation letters will be issued on Friday 17th of March. Delivery will be expected to commence on the 1st of July.

It is recommended that the programme covers a 21-month period from 1st July 2023 to 31st March 2025.

8.0 Service Requirements

8.1 The service envisions that all VCS applications will be assessed against the following requirements:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in activities, governance and management arrangements with plans on promoting inclusion within their service.
- Promoting a culture of collaboration and joint working with all youth and play provision and specialist services that support children and young people, particularly around, attainment, mental health, physical health and their development including their growth in communication skills and other soft skills.
- Commitment to increasing the participation and volunteering opportunities for young people, subsequently recognising and rewarding achievement.
- Work with the council and children and young people to publicise widely the youth and play offer, using methods that young people will use and on the identified web portal.
- Monitor and measure impact of children and young people's involvement in various activities by identifying with them their development, their learning and gained accredited qualifications.
- Provide sufficient workforce developmental opportunities to ensure safe and quality delivery.

9.0 Quality Assurance, Impact and Monitoring

9.1 It is proposed that a standardised MI (management information) system is implemented. This will enable the service to monitor performance and measure impact. All successful organisations will be provided with training and be provided with the MI system without the need to purchase it as costs will be covered by the Grant Programme. The MI system will be a:

- Central data monitoring system for all funded youth and play work in the city including the holiday activity and food programme (HAF).
- Facility where successful applicants can upload due diligence documents that will be visible to council officers to check and review.

- A signposting and advertising platform for the youth and play offer.
- Record keeping database for young people's development and their journey travelled. This will allow providers to demonstrate the impact of provision on children young people's lives, including measure learning outcomes / accreditations / Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other qualifications.
- Provision for qualitative data as well as provision for quantitative data and demographics.

10.0 Other Considerations

10.1 Risk Management and Mitigation

10.1.1 These proposals will ensure that as many risks are mitigated against and managed effectively and efficiently through regular engagement by service officers. Additional support through the service will be provided to the VCS including but not limited to training opportunities to understand, mitigate and write risk assessments.

10.2 Legal Considerations

10.2.1 This proposal will require new legal arrangements to be drawn up between the council and funded providers.

10.2.2. In making any decisions about the commissioning framework and its subsequent programme of work, the council will have due regard to the relevant statutory guidance and legislation. Specifically, the duty within Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 described as the "sufficiency duty" that the council "must, so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to:

- i) Sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing and sufficient facilities for such activities.
- ii) Sufficient recreational leisure time activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing and sufficient facilities for such activities.
- iii) Statutory guidance is also explicit that local authorities must take steps to ascertain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.
This report

10.2.3. This report informs how the service will meet the statutory duty and meet its legal responsibilities. An endorsement from Scrutiny would enable the service to begin implementing processes for effective, efficient and equitable commissioning.

11.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

11.1 The proposed new framework will build on the existing strengths and progress made over the last few years. It will aim to reduce operational overheads and seek to remove duplication. It is anticipated that more funding will reach grassroots organisations who are working directly with children and young people and will encourage and support applications from new and diverse non-white organisations that are not usually represented in the VCS.

11.2 The following next steps, in addition to the ones mentioned previously in this report, are recommended:

- a) It is recommended a further extension of until the 30th June 2023 is offered to all currently funded organisations. This will ensure continuity of delivery and allow time for mobilisation of new providers as well as a supportive de-commissioning if needed.
- b) It is proposed this grants programme runs from the 1st of July 2023 to the 31st of March 2025 – 21 months.
- c) The committee agrees that the Youth, Play and Participation service commences the new grants programme process as outlined in the proposed timeline and based on the principles of investment.

Appendices

1. Youth, Play and Participation Service Commissioning Framework