



Key Decision Report of the interim Corporate Director of People Services

Officer Key Decision	Date: 14 February 2020	Ward(s): All
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THE APPENDIX TO THIS REPORT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SUBJECT: Contract award for the operation, management and facilities management of Soapbox youth space

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report outlines the procurement process used to secure a provider for the operation, management and facilities management of Soapbox youth space. The intention is for this contract to start from 1 April 2020.
- 1.2 The council has undertaken a transparent procurement process in accordance with Rule 2.5 of the council's Procurement Rules to secure an appropriate provider from 1 April 2020. The contract award will be for fifteen years, with break clauses every 3 years (3+3+3+3+3) with no option for extension. The advertised estimated total value of the contract is £2,550,000 over the maximum 180 months' term of the contract. This is based on £170,000 per annum.
- 1.3 The specification requires the appointed provider to deliver high quality youth work that develops consistent, trusting relationships between young people and youth workers, over which young people have agency and in which they participate voluntarily.
- 1.4 The provider will be required to secure an offer that engages with and is of interest to young people from age 13 upwards and which is co-produced with them. The offer will be underpinned by key principles including being trauma-informed. In line with the council's commitments to make Islington the best place for young people to grow up, lead healthy and independent lives and create a safe and cohesive borough for all, the provider will also be a key delivery partner in Islington's approach to 'earliest help' for young people and families.

- 1.4 Furthermore, the specification sets out a requirement to deliver a range of facilities management functions in order that the Soapbox youth space is maintained to provide the highest quality, safe, comfortable and welcoming venue for young people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To award the contract to Dragon Hall Covent Garden Trust (DHCGT) for a period of fifteen (15) years (3+3+3+3+3) commencing from 1 April 2020

3. Date the decision is to be taken:

- 3.1 It is proposed that this decision will be made on 14 February 2020. The decision will be taken under delegated authority to the Corporate Director of People as agreed by the [Executive](#) on 17 October 2019.

4. Background

- 4.1 The council's intention is to secure an offer of high quality youth work which engages with young people aged 13 and up and which responds to their interests, needs and concerns. The offer will inspire and engage young people and will include clear pathways of access and support for the most vulnerable. The relationships developed through the youth work delivered will be trauma-informed and will play a key role in identifying concerns and challenges for young people which are beyond those typical of the adolescent phase. The offer will be delivered across a range of venues, including Soapbox.
- 4.2 In its budget for 2019-20, the council set out its intention to continue to support a comprehensive offer of youth work in the borough. The current contract to operate and manage Soapbox youth centre comes to an end on 31 March 2020.
- 4.3 The appointed provider will be required to raise additional resource to support the youth work offer at Soapbox including through fundraising, trading, volunteering and corporate support.
- 4.4 Details of the tendering process for the contract to operate, manage and facilities manage Soapbox youth space are set out in paragraphs 4.5 to 4.9.
- 4.5 The procurement was conducted as an Open Procedure, allowing for negotiation if deemed appropriate by the council. This one-stage process consists of Suitability Assessment questions followed by Method Statement questions. The latter relate to quality and financial criteria against which all bidders (which have passed the suitability assessment) are assessed. The entirety of the procurement process was conducted using the e-procurement system via the London Tenders Portal.
- 4.6 The contract was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). It was also advertised on Islington's website and distributed widely amongst existing networks and channels.
- 4.7 The tender evaluation panel consisted of the Head of Play and Youth Commissioning Services, the Commissioning and Quality Manager Play and Youth, a Commissioning and Quality Officer, Play and Youth and the Head of Children's Services Finance.

- 4.8 The panel recommended a contract award of the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) on the basis of 70% quality and 30% cost. The following criteria addressed the quality and cost elements of the submissions, which were evaluated on the organisations' tender submissions, clarified at interview and via the London Tenders Portal.
- 4.9 Two tenders were received. Following evaluation of the written tenders and a negotiation meeting, the tender evaluation panel concluded that the tender submitted by DHCGT was the most economically advantageous tender. The results of the evaluation are set out in the Exempt appendix to this report.

The criteria that were scored against are as follows:

Cost 30%

1. Financial forecast in line with the length of the service contract	30%
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Quality 70%

2. Proposed approach to contract mobilisation including: marketing, promotion and communication; TUPE, staff recruitment and training; community engagement; working with the council, including commissioners and other key professionals; business continuity planning and consistency in service delivery for young people	10%
3. Proposed approach to partnerships including: developing the reputation of Soapbox as a borough-wide, broad and locally connected offer for young people that meets the needs of local young people and the most vulnerable; the approach to integrated working with open for all organisations (play and youth) as well as professionals in targeted and specialist children's services	10%
4. Proposed approach to delivery of outcomes for young people including: delivery and evidence of outcomes and outputs as described in the service specification; approach to delivering a co-produced youth work programme; tools and methodologies for measuring the outputs and outcomes achieved; effective delivery of earliest help through high quality youth work relationships	10%
5. Proposed business plan including: income generation and reinvestment in Soapbox services; young people's involvement; fundraising in partnership with the council for both revenue and capital initiatives; creation of spaces for complementary services	10%
6. Proposed approach to delivering social value, including employment opportunities for young people, and apprenticeships; engagement with the council's commitment to 100 hours of experience of the world of work, and '11 By 11' initiative for all Islington young people; leadership opportunities within the organisation	10%

7. Proposed approach to safeguarding, early intervention and earliest help including: policies and procedures; staff training and development; holistic approaches to working with young people in need of additional support; safeguarding issues specifically focussed on supporting young volunteers and employees	10%
8. Proposed approach to facilities management	10%

**Total
100%**

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

The division has sufficient funding to cover the £170,000 per annum cost for this tender. The length of the contract for 15 years has risks attached which are mitigated with a break clause every 3 years. Finance also has the option of reviewing providers accounts with an open accounting policy clause in the final account.

5.2 Legal Implications:

The Council has power to provide the offer of youth work under its general power of competence (section 1 Localism Act 2011). Accordingly, the Council has power to enter into a contract for the provision of such services (section 1 Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997).

The services being procured are subject to the light touch regime set out in Regulations 74 to 77 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). The threshold for application of this light touch regime is currently £615,278.00. The value of the proposed contract is above this threshold There are no prescribed procurement processes under the light touch regime. Therefore, the council may use its discretion as to how it conducts the procurement process provided that it discharges its duty to comply with the Treaty principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and fair competition, conducts the procurement in conformance with the information that it provides in the OJEU advert; and ensures that the time limits that it imposes on service providers is reasonable and proportionate.

The council's Procurement Rules require light touch contracts over the value of £500,000.00 to be subject to competitive tender. In compliance with the requirements of the light touch regime in the Regulations and the council's Procurement, a competitive tendering exercise has been undertaken with the contract being advertised in OJEU using the open procedure. Dragon Hall Covent Garden Trust received the higher overall rating. and, therefore, may be awarded the contract provided the decision maker is reasonably satisfied as to the competence of the chosen tenderer and that the tender price represents value for money for the council. In reaching her decision, the decision maker should take into account the information contained in the exempt appendix.

5.3 Environmental Implications

The main environmental impact of the youth offer is the use of energy, water, and waste generation on the sites. However, the specification requires that these impacts are kept to a minimum through the provision of high quality facilities management, with ecological efficiencies identified wherever possible. Organisations running youth centres have a vested interest in ecologically sound practice, given the high level of interest in environmental issues amongst young people with council commissioners ensuring this is adhered to through robust contract monitoring and quality assurance processes in place over the life of the contract.

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The award of this contract is likely to have positive impacts on residents of all ages as young people are supported through high quality youth work relationships to make the most of their teenage years and contribute positively to their communities. The positive relationships delivered, both between youth workers and young people and amongst different groups of young people themselves, are intended to support the personal, social and emotional development of recipients and their understanding of the world around them. This development, in turn, is likely to ensure that young people are more able to sustain positive personal friendships, make well informed decisions and manage their emotions effectively. Confident, positive and well-regulated young people are less likely to be vulnerable to being drawn into crime, anti-social behaviour or other less positive outcomes and be able to contribute positively at home, school and in the wider community. The service specification requires providers to have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that the services provided eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity.

5.5 Social Impact:

The service specification for this contract includes a number of explicit requirements in relation to social value, which have been identified in the proposal submitted by DHCCT. These include:

- Supporting local resident young people with work experience and employment opportunities, which include at least 15 apprenticeships over the life of the contract
- Engaging in the '100 hours' World of Work' and '11 by 11' offers

- Bringing in additional resources to enhance the offer over the life of the contract, through fundraising as well as creative use of the Soapbox building for hires and engaging with volunteers

6. Reasons for the decision

6.1 Approval of the recommendation to award a contract to DHCGT to operate, manage and facilities manage Soapbox youth space will:

- Provide continuity of service for young people, including some of Islington's most vulnerable residents;
- Ensure continued delivery of a high quality youth work offer that contributes to the integrated and holistic services available for young people and families in Islington, with a focus on early intervention and prevention;
- Ensure the safe operation of the building to provide a safe, welcoming and comfortable space that is dedicated to young people;
- Maximise opportunities to generate additional income that can enhance the offer to young people and sustain this over the life of the contract.

7. Record of the decision:

7.1 I have today decided to take the decision set out in section 2 of this report for the reasons set out above.

Signed by:

Andrew Fraser
Interim Corporate Director, People

Date

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