



Report of: Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	28/03/2022	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: YOUNG ISLINGTON UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK OFFER UPDATE

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Over the past two years, the council has been working to develop and deliver a new universal youth offer for Islington's young people. The council wanted to ensure that the needs of more young people were being met, particularly those who are most vulnerable and those who may not have accessed the universal offer before. The new model has been developed with the vision for the delivery of youth work that is rooted in creating a well-supported, sustainable and interconnected network of community based and grass-root youth and community services, where all partners work together towards a unified vision and ambition for young people
- 1.2 The delivery of the new universal youth offer required the procurement of contracts for a number of elements of the model. This report provides an update of the delivery of youth work from the youth spaces Lift, Rose Bowl and Platform

2. Recommendations

- 2.1
 - For the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to take note of the developments and delivery of services in relation to lots 1 and 2 of the new universal youth offer
 - For the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to take note of the developments and delivery of services in relation to lot 3, which is being delivered in-house for a period of time

3. Background and Design and Consultation Principles – Universal Youth Offer

3.1 Since February 2020, the council has been shaping, with young people and key stakeholders, a new universal youth offer for young people in Islington in line with the ethos and values of Fairer Together and the objectives of the Youth Safety strategy. The vision for the new model is for one which:

- engages young people who have previously under used universal youth services,
- reaches further into Somali, Turkish and Bangladeshi communities
- more directly addresses inequalities, e.g. accessibility for young people with disabilities, and from LGBTQ+ communities,
- attracts those that are vulnerable to poorer outcomes,
- attracts those who are living in more deprived wards or households,
- effectively draws in the collective capacity of the Islington community, and
- better utilises spaces available to engage young people, including establishing a new youth space on the Andover estate.

The development of the new universal youth offer coincided with the ending of a number of notable youth offer contracts. In order to make the new offer as effective as possible, it was decided that key elements of the new model would be procured in three distinct, but inter-connected lots under one specification.

The intention, across the offer, was to secure

- youth work delivery whose elements are connected and rooted in local, grassroots community delivery,
- a strengthened offer of detached and outreach youth work, and
- an outcomes-focused offer that is effectively supported, delivering quality youth work across the borough.

3.2 Lot 1 – Youth work quality leadership and impact (QLIP). The specification for this lot required the appointed provider to support and stimulate high quality youth work delivery across the new Young Islington model, for example through training for youth workers, providing quality assurance processes, further developing theories of change, linking into regional and national support and submitting joint bids for cross-borough youth work programmes.

3.3 Lot 2 - Youth work delivery Lift and Rose Bowl, Summerversity, Emotional Wellbeing Service and Direct Access Social Prescribing Service. The council required a provider that was able to deliver the youth offer, summer programme and emotional wellbeing services, alongside a separately funded Direct Access Social Prescribing Service. The specification stipulated that delivery was to be centred in and around the Lift and Rose Bowl youth spaces in the borough.

3.4 Lot 3 - Youth work delivery, management and operation of Platform. This specification required the appointed provider to play a major role in securing the Young Islington universal youth work offer and to ensure that Platform continued to function as a borough wide provision for all Islington young people. Platform's capacity to deliver exciting arts opportunities, for example in music, performance, dance, spoken word, lyric writing and music production is central to its offer to young people. The requirement for the provider of Lot 3

was that it would be expected to build on and further amplify this reputation for innovation and excellence.

4. **Impact of COVID- 19**

There was significant interest from a number of providers, local, pan-London and national, prior to the formal and official advertisement of lots 1, 2 and 3 via the London Tenders Portal.

A number of organisations which had registered an interest in submitting bids on the London Tenders Portal, and whom had attended the market warming events, did not tender. They were contacted afterwards in order to understand and ascertain the reasons for this. The overwhelming and dominant reason given was that the (economic) impact of the pandemic had made it difficult for them to commit to bringing in the funds required for lots 2 and 3. The COVID-19 pandemic had adversely impacted on the business model and income of a number of providers and on potential income generation opportunities they had designed. The impact of the pandemic on the procurement process is therefore significant to note.

5. **Update on Current Offer**

- 5.1 **Lot 1** – Contract mobilisation commenced officially on 7 December following the cool off period for the signed published decision. Mobilisation has progressed well, contracts have been signed and the providers, London Youth and Marys have recruited/identified lead officers to take forward the work as detailed in the specification

As part of the lot 1 contract, London Youth and Mary's will be leading on an annual report which will highlight the quality and impact of youth work delivery across the new young Islington model. This will report will feed into the quarterly stakeholder quality and impact steering group, which will look at the qualitative and quantitative impact and learning of the model across the sector. At the time of writing, the specific details for this steering group were in the process of being confirmed.

Young people's leadership. This is key to the delivery of the specification and will be led by Mary's. This will include the engagement of a group of young people who are interested in careers or other involvement in youth-related leadership opportunities. These young people will access training, mentoring and other support to help them to be effective leaders in their communities with a focus on those who are more vulnerable or from an under-represented group.

- 5.2 **Lot 2** – Contract mobilisation has progressed smoothly. Isledon Arts CIC has appointed a new 30 hour per week lead youth worker for Lift whose role will focus on an assertive outreach strategy to engage more vulnerable and under-represented young people through attendance at school assemblies, college fairs, community festivals, events, and promotion through partner organisations, attending the new locality youth networks, ward partnership, and wellbeing network meetings to share what is on offer at Lift and make new connections as well as working closely with the Youth Council.

Isledon is mobilising to engage a minimum of 1500 Islington young people a year across Lift and Rose Bowl.

- 5.3 **Lot 3** – Following the recent withdrawal of Fourth Monkey and its subcontractor Beyond the Box, Islington Council made the decision to bring the delivery of services and Platform in-house. This is in order to ensure that young people can still benefit from the support that they need and to ensure that we continue to adhere to our Young Islington principles and ethos. It has been decided to do this for a period of one year initially taking effect from 28th February 2021, whilst decisions are made in relation to longer-term arrangements.

The council is using a mixed economy hybrid approach for Platform which involves the creation of a small internal team. This will be enhanced and supplemented by the commissioning of some key organisations by way of direct award – Brandon Centre (who were part of the Fourth Monkey model) and Gain Ctrl (who are a long-standing partner of Platform). The responsibility for building management is transferring to Corporate Landlord Services. In addition, nine members of Isledon Arts staff, who predominately worked part time at Platform, have been subject to TUPE arrangements and are now directly employed by the Council. The Council is currently recruiting two additional members of staff - one youth hub manager and one youth worker. Young people will be involved in recruitment of both posts.

In relation to the offer that is being planned for delivery from Platform please see Appendix 1

5 Implications

5.1 Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications to this report. By way of background, the contract values are as follows:

- Lot 1 - £150k per annum
- Lot 2 - £590k per annum.
- Lot 3 - £320k per annum. This budget will be used to support the delivery of services in house. The financial implications of which are being developed as the new offer takes shape.

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications to this report, by way of background, a compliant procurement process under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 was undertaken for a universal youth offer comprising three Lots, with contracts awarded to the following:

Lot 1 Federation of London Youth

Lot 2 Isledon Arts CIC at Rosebowl and Lift

Lot 3 Fourth Monkey Limited at Platform

Lot 1 and Lot 2 services are up and running and Lot 3 service providers after consultation with the Council and service users as set out in this report withdrew their offer.

Ten of the incumbent's staff (Isledon Arts CIC) who would have been transferred to Fourth Monkey have been TUPE'd to the Council as the Council has decided to bring the delivery of service for Lot 3 in house. The Platform building will also be managed by the Council's Corporate Landlord Services.

Some elements of the service for Lot 3 will be provided by awarding two smaller contracts:

Legal Implications Author: Jabeen Story, Chief Commercial Contracts and Procurement Solicitor

Tel: 0207 527 1850

Email: Jabeen.Story@islington.gov.uk
