

Title of meeting: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 25 March 2019

Subject: New Open Access Youth Provision

Report by: Alison Jeffery

Wards affected: All wards

Key decision: Yes

Full Council decision: No

1.0 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to commission additional open access youth services in the city, building on and complementing the existing youth centres and adventure playground provision. The aim is to provide constructive activities for older children and young people aged 10 to 18 years to help keep them safe and well and divert them away from anti-social behaviour and crime. The report sets out a proposal for additional youth service provision commissioned through a partnership with voluntary sector providers. It gives details of a proposed programme for deploying trusted adults to deliver assertive outreach and a programme of positive activities to promote and improve young people's health, well-being and safety and to support their education and learning.

2.0 Recommendations

- a) The city Council to commission additional open access youth services for children and young people aged 10 years and older for a 2 year period in 2019/20 and 2020/21**
- b) That £250,000 is released from the Environment & Community Safety Portfolio Reserve each year for two years to fund this.**
- c) That these services are commissioned from the voluntary sector, linking with the arrangements to promote 'Trusted Adult' relationships, funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, in line with the national strategy for tackling serious violence.**
- d) That the City Council helps to identify facilities which can be used by the voluntary sector providers to allow them to deliver this service.**
- e) That this project starts in the early part of the 2019/20 financial year**

3.0 Background

3.1 There has been a significant reduction in youth service provision across Portsmouth, as elsewhere, over recent years. A mapping exercise has been undertaken of the current provision and shows this provision is mainly found in the areas that align with Council housing. Youth clubs exist in Portsea, Buckland, Somerstown and Paulsgrove/Wymering. There used to be additional provision but this has been cut in recent years.

3.2 The City Council has received feedback that while the existing provision is valued, more opportunities need to be available in the city for young people for constructive activities designed to prevent young people falling into anti-social behaviour or criminal exploitation and to help re-engage them in some cases with education and learning. Sport based activities are felt to be particularly valuable in this respect.

4.0 Reasons for recommendations

4.1 The recommendations are designed to release funding to local voluntary sector providers in order that they can use their collective experience, skills and expertise on all aspects of the proposed method of delivery to reduce risk and vulnerability and increase the resilience of young people. A proportion of the budget will be allocated to provide accredited training to young people, to build pathways and onward opportunities to progress in education, employment or training.

4.3 The aim of the recommendation is to build on existing youth provision, applying an evidence-based methodology and utilising neutral community spaces where young people can interact in a positive and safe manner. The provision will be open to all young people; in addition there will be concerted effort to identify young people aged 10 to 18 years of age who are vulnerable or at risk so that they can be encouraged to benefit. The nature and level of identified vulnerability and risk will be considered in relation to family circumstances, peer groups, other social networks, the local neighbourhood and wider community. This will take into account potential risk factors like substance misuse, social and emotional health and wellbeing, healthy relationships and the threat of contextual safeguarding risks associated with child sexual exploitation and recruitment into child criminal exploitation, commonly referred to as 'county lines'.

4.4 Delivery will centre around a 48 week a year open access offer of assertive outreach and the provision of positive activities which will focus on developing a rapport, establishing relationships and building trust with young people. Activities will be timetabled and co-produced with young people, for young people and will have a focus towards sport and physical activity, whilst also including other forms of arts and cultural activities through ongoing consultation with young people. The model of approach will utilise community assets by opening up opportunities and access to identify young people who may be marginalised, disaffected, vulnerable and deemed to be at risk of harm and exploitation. Specialist staff being deployed to work with young people will be able to identify the need for any additional support or intervention that may be required and will signpost to more

specialist services where required. Existing safeguarding information sharing and referral arrangements will apply, as necessary and appropriate.

4.5 The partnership will offer informal education and learning services to impact on positive life choices, health & wellbeing and will promote social action as a method of developing and inspiring young people to become active citizens and leaders.

4.6 Subject to a favourable Cabinet decision and appropriate procurement process, programme planning will commence as soon as possible in April 2019, with a period of consultation, recruitment and deployment of staff, to develop partnership protocols and confirm joint working agreements including links with the existing council run youth centres and adventure playgrounds. A phased roll out of activities will then take place across June and early July 2019 for a full launch of the programme during the summer holiday period at the end of July and throughout August 2019. From September 2019, a full weekly programme of activities will be in place in line with the following academic years up to the end of March 2021. This will be coordinated as appropriate with the youth centre and adventure playground activities and as far as possible with other known voluntary sector provision.

5.0 Equality impact assessment

1.1 The intention of this proposal is to increase opportunities for vulnerable older children and young people aged 10 years and older. While offering access to all, this will include identifying, supporting and intervening with additionally vulnerable young people including those who may have suffered, or are likely to suffer, significant harm or abuse and/or neglect, including young people who are at risk of harm and exploitation outside of the home.

5.2 Given of the range of local needs and circumstances the aim will be to intervene early in order to prevent increasing vulnerability as well as intervene with young people where the risk of harm is already an identified feature of concern. It is anticipated that these young people will experience varying levels of vulnerability and harm in relation to their family and home circumstances, including deprivation, domestic abuse, mental ill health substance misuse, homelessness and exploitation.

5.3 The additional provision will promote access and opportunity, reduce vulnerability, and increase safety and improve outcomes for young people. The intended impact of is to deliver impactful interventions to a larger number of vulnerable young people than is possible at present.

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 This reports recommends that the Council commissions the additional open access youth services with the total aggregate value of this proposed public services contract opportunity being £500,000 over the proposed two-year period of the project.

6.2 This contract opportunity falls within the so called "Light-touch" services listed in Schedule 3 to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCRs 2015).

6.3 However, the total value of the contract opportunity (£500,000 over 2 years) does not meet the threshold for the "Light-touch" services (currently £615,278), and therefore only the 'below-threshold' rules contained within the PCRs apply. These rules require that the proposed contract opportunity is published on the Contracts Finder if it is published elsewhere.

6.5 The contract opportunity meets the definition of a 'high value contract' in the Councils Contract Procedure Rules ("CPRs") and therefore the provisions of Rule 8 apply, requiring the Council obtain at least three written tenders via the Council's eSourcing System.

6.6 The Council Officers will be required to ensure compliance with the above rules or to follow relevant waiver procedures.

6.7 Additionally, any provider would need to satisfy the Authority that upon conclusion there are no ongoing liabilities associated with termination or such matters as whether, given the provision of services there are any potential risks associated with acquired employment status - TUPE and the like.

6.8 The award is a key decision and one for noting on the forward plan.

7.0 Director of Finance's comments

7.1 Funding of £500,000 has been set aside within the Environment & Community Safety Portfolio reserve which could be used to support this proposal. All costs, including commissioning of services as well as any hire of facilities or staffing etc. will need to be contained within the proposed allocation of £250,000 per year for two years. Voluntary sector providers will need to ensure that they have an exit strategy in place for any projects or initiatives that they undertake, since there is no guarantee of any continuing funding allocation after the two year period.

Signed by:

Appendices: None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by: