

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE AND SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 February 2014 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Pauline Morrison, John Paschoud, Jim Mallory, Jackie Addison, Anne Affiku, David Britton, Patsy Foreman, Stella Jeffrey, Jacq Paschoud, Philip Peake, Alan Till and Sharon Archibald

APOLOGIES: Councillors Olufunke Abidoye, Paul Bell, Duwayne Brooks, Marion Nisbet, Monsignor N Rothern, Gail Exon, Lisa Palin, Mark Saunders and Crada Onuegbu

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Joan Millbank (Cabinet Member for the Third Sector), Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager), Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services), Helen Glass (Principal Lawyer), Andrew Hagger (Scrutiny Manager), Mike Haw (Mayor's Political Assistant), Mervyn Kaye (Youth Services Manager), Salena Mulhere (Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Barrie Neal (Head of Corporate Policy and Governance), Jonathan Slater (Strategic Development Officer - Children and Young People) (Voluntary Action Lewisham), Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning) and Charly Williams (Children and Young People's Commissioner)

1. Election of the Chair

Andrew Hagger (Scrutiny Manager) opened the meeting and sought nominations for the Chair of the meeting.

Councillor Morrison nominated Councillor John Paschoud and the committees agreed that Councillor Paschoud would chair the meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 6 November 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2014 were agreed as a true record.

3. Declarations of interest

Councillor Mallory declared a non-prejudicial interest under item four as the Chair of Lee Green Lives.

Councillor John Paschoud declared a non-prejudicial interest under item four as a member of the management board of Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum and as a member of the Lewisham Disability Coalition.

Councillor Addison declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item four as a member of the board of trustees of Walk in Space youth club.

4. Response from Mayor and Cabinet on matters referred - Reshaping Youth Services

Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning) introduced the response from Mayor and Cabinet and highlighted the following key points:

- The mapping information requested by the committees had been provided in the report.
- Where possible, officers had been in contact with the young people who had been using Oakridge youth centre.
- Of the previous 30 regular attendees, eight had signed up for other provision and the Council's text message information service.
- A new provider had been found for the Oakridge centre. The organisation had been working with VAL to ensure that after an initial period of three year funding from the Council its services would become self-sustaining.
- Officers planned to align youth service commissioning with the main grant programme, where this was feasible.
- Contracts with providers would be as simple and accessible as possible.

In response to questions from the Committees, the following key points were noted:

- The Council's lawyers were drawing up a contract for commissioned youth provision. This would be available shortly – and would be circulated to chairs and vice-chairs of committees as soon as possible.
- The central element of contracts would remain the same – but each organisation would have a separate service specification and monitoring arrangements.
- The contract was required to contain key legal provisions in full; specifically those relating to child protection, data protection and the right of the Council to terminate. Nonetheless, efforts were being made to ensure that contracts were accessible and comprehensible for small organisations.
- Contracts would be based on those used for the main grants programme – which had been agreed with the community and voluntary sector through the Lewisham Compact. An example was available on the Council's website.
- The provider taking over the Oakridge centre would start running a supplementary school – but the intention was that they would set up universal provision as soon as possible (expected to be within one or two months).

Members of the Committee then-

Resolved: to note the response from Mayor and Cabinet.

5. Commissioned Youth Provision

Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning) introduced the report; the following key points were noted:

- 151 bids for funding had been received from 97 organisations.
- 73% of organisations were from the community and voluntary sector
- 66% were Lewisham based
- A range of organisations had submitted bids across a broad range of types of provision, geographic spread and term-time/non-term-time delivery.
- Bids for funding totalled £4.5m (significantly more than the £966k available) – with £1.5 in linked funding from other sources.
- Bids were of very high quality. Only 5 organisations from the 151 applying were ineligible for funding.
- Following the scoring and analysis process 37 projects had been put forward for the £966k available.
- 89% of these organisations were from the community and voluntary sector.
- 74% were Lewisham based.
- 68% were to provide universal provision.
- 32% were to provide targeted provision.
- The commissioning process had also enabled organisations to apply for linked funding. This meant that for every £1 allocated in funding £1.87 of services would be delivered.

In response to questions from the committees of Warwick Tomsett and Mervyn Kaye (Youth Services Manager) the following key points were noted:

- The commissioning proposals set out plans for allocation of £856,493 of provision from the £966,000 available. The remaining funding would be used for responsive commissioning of provision throughout the year to meet specific needs as they arose.
- The process for allocating responsive funding was being developed.
- Officers had been working to ensure that there was an even geographic spread of provision – including in the South East of the borough.
- A range of activities had also been proposed to ensure that there was open access to a mix of activities for any young person who was interested.
- The commissioning process had been designed to ensure that membership organisations, such as the Scouts and Brownies, demonstrated how they'd encourage and widen participation. However, these groups would not be asked to alter their membership criteria.
- The main grants programme had been extended by a year to link with funding from the youth service. The aim was to create a mixture of short-term and longer term funding for different activities, as required.
- The youth service would work with commissioned groups to ensure they had plans in place to sustain their services over the longer term.
- Officers were working to ensure the right provision was in place for all young people – this required some organisations to change the way they were working in order to better serve their target populations.
- For some organisations, commissioning would be a continuation of funding.
- The commissioning fund should add greater value - in contrast to what had been delivered through previous funding.

In response to questions from the committees of Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services) the following key points were noted:

- The Council had committed to providing three year funding through the community and voluntary sector compact.
- The decision to provide one year grant funding in 2014/15 would enable different areas of the Council and the community and voluntary sector to work together.
- All organisations were required to be monitored annually. Their funding only remained in place as long as they continued to perform successfully and produce their required outcomes.
- Community and voluntary sector organisations would be receiving funding for specific projects from different Council services – including public health, support for older people, the main grants programme and commissioned youth services.
- Through the compact steering group the Council had agreed to streamline the performance monitoring information required from funded organisations.
- Organisations would have a single monitoring officer to deal with – and could expect visits from one monitoring officer rather than separate visits from officers about each area of funding.
- Council grant funding was for specific purposes, and could not be used to finance loans or generate interest payments.

Jonathan Slater (Strategic Development Officer – Children and Young People, Voluntary Action Lewisham) addressed the committees; the following key points were noted:

- Overall the commissioning process had been effective.
- VAL had been asked to assess funding applications to determine which organisations they were already working with and to determine whether links could be made; there were very few organisations VAL was not already in contact with.
- VAL was working to maintain the focus on measuring outcomes – using the think/learn/do data indicators.
- The Lewisham Compact (setting out how the Council works with community and voluntary sector organisations) needed to be refreshed.
- VAL would work with officers to review the application process.

Joan Millbank (Cabinet Member for the Third Sector) addressed the committees; the following key points were noted:

- The commissioning process seemed to have been roundly positive for community and voluntary sector organisations.
- She had not received any casework or phone calls as a result of the process.
- The Council was keen to ensure that robust monitoring took place in order to ensure accountability – without burdening organisations with requests for information and monitoring visits.
- It was encouraging that joint working and sharing of information between community and voluntary sector organisations seemed to be taking place.

Resolved: to note the report and to refer the Committees' views to Mayor and Cabinet.

6. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

The committees resolved to refer their views with Mayor and Cabinet, as follows:

The Committees raised concerns that youth service provision delivered by traditional membership organisations could be perceived as not being universally accessible. Officers should work with providers to ensure that services are promoted to all.

Further information about funding of organisations should be provided at the earliest opportunity, including:

- Funding that organisations already receive from Lewisham Council
- The current funding that organisations receive from the Council for providing youth services
- The extra capacity and services that will be provided by organisations as a result of the Commissioned Youth Provision

The Committees acknowledged the good work that has been carried out by officers in the Children and Young People Directorate and Community Services Directorate in developing a joined up approach to Commissioned Youth Provision. The Committees stressed the importance of aligning the timetables of the Commissioned Youth Provision and the Main Grants Programme as soon as possible. In particular, they should look to achieving a balance between strategic, longer-term grants and shorter, single issue or activity-based grants.

Officers should continue to build on the work carried out to map services in the borough in order to support the on-going development of a strategic approach to ensure a more balanced provision by location and by type of activity and in ways that enhance partnership working, and the provision of services, with the voluntary sector.

The Mayor and Cabinet and the Children and Young People Select Committee should be provided with information at the earliest opportunity about how the 'Responsive Fund' (the remainder of the commissioning budget reserved for in-year spot purchasing of services for unmet needs) will be administered.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Chair:

Date:
