
PLAY & YOUNG CARERS COMMISSIONS

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of People

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To request that Council waive Contract Procedure Rules under exemption 17, to enable officers to contract with Groundwork North East for the delivery of the Play Commission, and to contract with the YMCA Tees Valley for the Young Carers commission.

Summary

Play

2. Darlington Borough Council commissioned Groundwork North East to deliver play sessions across Darlington within the 11 most disadvantaged wards from 1st September 2009. The expected outcome of the contract was to create a comprehensive good quality service and ensure an equitable level of provision across these targeted wards. This commission contributed to Darlington's Play and Free time Strategy: "Let's make play stay!"
3. The commission has been highly successful with provision being developed in consultation with children in all identified areas and the number of sessions delivered has exceeded the number required in the contract.
4. Although the value of the service procured is in excess of the current EU threshold of £156,442, the provision of play is a Part B Service and therefore not subject to the EU regulations. The current contractor was appointed through an open tender process however due to the nature of the commission we only received two tenders. Neither tender met the minimum standards required so the process had to be changed to a negotiated process. There were also issues under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), this caused further problems when trying to conclude the tender process. The contract was awarded to Groundwork North East and expires on 31st March 2011.
5. The continuing provision of play has been identified as a priority, albeit at a reduced rate of £145,000 and £100,000 for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively commencing from 1st April 2011. Due to the difficulties encountered when the tender was carried out in 2009 and the success of the current provider in delivering the provision officers believe that no benefit will be gained by re-tendering this contract. Therefore it is proposed that we contract with

Groundwork North East for a further two years.

Young Carers

6. The Young Carers service is currently commissioned to deliver a service to 98 Young Carers; the service is provided by the Tees Valley YMCA. The service is funded by Darlington Borough Council and the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). It is a well regarded service, which has reported very positive outcomes for its clientele. The YMCA Tees Valley is currently commissioned through a strategic grant and not a service contract.
7. The continuing provision of a Young Carers service has been identified as a priority by the Children's Trust, albeit at a reduced rate of £40,841.(£30,000 DBC + £10,841 CAMHS) from April 1st 2011. The reduction in funding will result in a reduced level of service from the provider. Officers believe that due to the reduction in funding the authority is unlikely to attract new providers for the service. A move to a new provider is also likely to have implications under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), officers believe no benefit will be gained by going out to tender
8. The value of the contract over two years will be £81,682; this is in excess of the £75,000 threshold for tendering. Waiving Contract Procedure Rules will allow a smooth continuation of service and an opportunity to review the service to align it with the revised funding envelope. Therefore it is proposed that we contract with Tees Valley YMCA for a further two years.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Council waive Contract Procedure Rules to allow officers to contract with a) Groundwork North East and b) YMCA Tees Valley until 31/3/2013.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) Play
 - (i) There is a lack of suitable providers in the marketplace and there were complications encountered during the previous tender process.
 - (ii) Groundwork have improved the quality of provision, using collective policies and procedures , implementing a comprehensive training programme for all staff and developing an inclusive approach to service delivery. The service has worked extremely effectively with a wide range of partner agencies and organisations across Darlington to ensure that play is embedded in local communities.

(b) Young Carers

- (i) The funding has been reduced for the Young Carers commission, and it has been anticipated that this reduction of funding, plus the TUPE complications will diminish the likelihood of other providers wishing to tender for this work.

Murray Rose
Director of People

Background Papers

The Children's Plan - Department for Children, Schools and Families - 2007

The National Play Strategy- Department for Children, Schools and Families- 2008

Darlington Play and Free Time Strategy: "Let's make play stay"-September 2007-updated 2009

Reports to Children's Trust Board -27th November 2008, 27th November 2009, 14th January

2010, May 2010

Cabinet Report-July 2007

Darlington Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011

Young Carers Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2011

Lynn Henderson x2820

Simon Bishop x2846

S17 Crime and Disorder	Play can contribute towards increasing community cohesion
Health and Well Being	Play helps children develop a sense of wellbeing, develop emotional responses, can help prevent obesity and can increase resilience to mental health problems. The Health and Well Being of Young Carers is directly affected by this report, and also, in some to most cases those being cared for are adults not currently services by Adult Social Services
Carbon Impact	Children will be able to play in their local community without the need to travel.
Diversity	Services are fully inclusive.
Wards Affected	Play - Central, Cockerton West, Cockerton East, Northgate, Eastbourne, Lascelles, Bank Top, Lingfield, Park East, Haughton East, North Road. Young Carers - All wards in the Borough as Young Carers are not geographically concentrated in any singular ward
Groups Affected	Play - Children aged 5-13 Young Carers - Young Carers, Adults being cared for, Schools through improved attendance, 14-19 NEETs
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not propose changes to the budget or policy framework but requires Council approval to waive Contract Procedure Rules
Key Decision	This is not an executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Play - Contributes to all 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes including increasing community cohesion. Young Carers - This report is consistent with the Aspiring Darlington theme
Efficiency	50% reduction on original commission

MAIN REPORT

Information and analysis -

Play

11. In 2008 the Government published the national Play Strategy which set out the vision for play “to be a major part of children’s happy healthy childhood”. The vision was for :-
 - (a) A variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play free of charge
 - (b) Local neighbourhoods to be and feel like safe and interesting places to play
 - (c) Routes to children’s play spaces to be safe and accessible for all children and young people
 - (d) Parks and play spaces that are attractive and welcoming to children, young people and are well maintained and used
 - (e) Children and young people have a clear stake in public spaces and their play is accepted by neighbours
 - (f) Children and young people play in a way that respects other people and their property
 - (g) Children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of play spaces
 - (h) Play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people including disabled children and children from ethnic minority groups in the local community.
 - (i) A need for a high quality play workforce which is skilled and qualified
12. Darlington Borough Council allocated £370,000 for 2009/2010 to deliver open access play schemes across the 11 most disadvantaged wards as Part of Darlington’s Play Strategy. Although the value of the service procured, is in excess of the current EU threshold of £156,442, the provision of play is a Part B Service and therefore not subject to the EU regulations.
13. The current contractor was appointed through an open tender process however due to the nature of the commission we only received two tenders. Neither tender met the minimum standards required so the process had to be changed to a negotiated process. There were also issues Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), this caused further problems when trying to conclude the tender process. The contract was awarded to Groundwork North East and expires on 31st March 2011.
14. The draft Medium Term Financial Plan includes funding for the delivery of the Play Commission for a further two years commencing 1st April 2011, albeit at a reduced rate of £145,000 and £100,000 for 2011/12 and 2012/13 respectively. Due to the difficulties encountered when the tender was carried out in 2009 and the success of the current provider in delivering the provision officers believe that no benefit will be gained by re-tendering this contract. Therefore it is proposed that we contract with Groundwork North East for a further two years.
15. As the commission required Groundwork North East to work with all the existing play providers in the voluntary and community sectors as lead organisation, TUPE negotiations between Groundwork North East and these organisations took place regarding the transfer of staff. These negotiations, in the case of 1 organisation became protracted, which led to a delay in implementation until January 2010, with full level of provision not being realised

until April 2010.

16. The commission is on track to deliver 986 play sessions with a beneficiary figure of 1,000 children over the life of the contract; this exceeds that required by the contract. All Play Leaders are now qualified to a level 3 qualification in Play Work and are subject to ongoing professional development and supervision processes.
17. Partnership working has been key and has avoided duplication of activities, provided more opportunities for children and young people, made greater use of community resources and established sessions that can be delivered jointly by sharing staff e.g. Barnardo's, Disabled Children's Team, Children's Centres, Community Partnerships and Sports Development.
18. Better outcomes for children and families can be demonstrated by the Play Service's involvement with Looked after children in foster care; play staff have been trained in the use of Common Assessment Framework and disabled children are accessing the service either with support or on their own.
19. Parent and Child evaluations demonstrate how much the service is valued and an external evaluation by Darlington College has indicated that the provision is good quality. Children are involved in designing the sessions.

Young Carers.

20. Darlington has taken a proactive approach to supporting young carers since February 2000 when a Carers Development Officer was employed by the then Social Services Department to progress the carers' agenda in Darlington. This was in response to the need to implement the 1999 National Carers' Strategy, which included increasing the provision of breaks to carers (including young carers) via Carers Grant funding.
21. Our approach was twofold:
 - (a) to develop and deliver a specialist young carers service;
 - (b) to ensure that mainstream services were better able to identify young carers and to meet their needs, whether within their own service or through referral to the specialist project.
22. The current services provided to Darlington Young Carers by the YMCA are to relieve stress in young carers and their families by providing breaks for young carers, working to prevent breakdown of caring arrangements and promoting social inclusion for young carers. This is achieved by: -
 - (a) Providing young carers with positive activities and opportunities to meet other young carers;
 - (b) One to one practical and emotional support and advocacy on behalf of individual young carers;
 - (c) Additional one to one support for young carers with the heaviest caring responsibilities;
 - (d) Raising awareness of young carers, their needs and the support available to them in schools and the wider community.

23. The current specialist service for Young Carers is delivered by the YMCA Timeout Young Carers project. The Children's Trust's Joint Commissioning Unit reviewed the current Young Carer's service including a full service review with a needs analysis, and recommended to adopt the following strategy to re-commission this service for the next four years of the Comprehensive Spending Review:
- (a) Create a specification specifically targeted at the 1:1 and group work elements of the current provision, ensuring CAMHS are satisfied that the new specification supports mental health issues;
 - (b) Incorporate financial savings;
 - (c) Identify areas of mainstreaming of activities elements of the current specification;
 - (d) Seek approval from the Children's Trust's Joint Commissioning Unit on the revised specification;
 - (e) Tender the revised service to the market through the Procurement Team.
24. The YMCA have also secured other funding sources for transitional work for 16-25 year old young carers from the Adults element of the PCT, but this funding is for one year only, and has also made a bid to the Big Lottery Fund for peer mentoring for Young Carers. This bid is in conjunction with other voluntary sector providers in Stockton.

Outcome of Consultation

Play

25. Consultation with children and families is firmly embedded within Groundwork North East's approach to service delivery and is key to the success of this commission.

Young Carers

26. Consultation has been carried out with CAMHS with regard to the approach to the market for the Young Carers Service