

Committee:	Dated:
Community and Children’s Services Committee	11 March 2024
Subject: Commissioning Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of funding?	N/A
Has this funding source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Discussion
Report author: Greg Knight, Head of Commissioning, Commissioning and Partnerships	

Summary

This report provides Members with highlights of current activities, successes, issues and priorities for the Department of Community and Children’s Services (DCCS) Commissioning Team.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report
- Note the contents of the DCCS Contracts Register (see Appendix 1)
- Note the contents of the DCCS Sourcing Plan (see Appendix 2)

Main Report

Background

1. The Commissioning Team currently manages 127 contracts, (not including social care placement contracts), with an approximate total value of £36,000,000 over the duration of their contract terms.

Commissioned Services Highlights

2. This section provides highlights of the current activities, successes, issues and priorities for the Commissioning Team and its work programme.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – City Assessment Centre

3. The tender process for the City Assessment Centre, which included a site visit for providers, a written technical quality, social value, financial assessment, and a face-to-face presentation, has concluded. Thames Reach Housing Association have been appointed as the provider. Officers are currently in the final processes of completing the building handover, with a view to the scheme opening in February 2024. The service will provide 14 purpose-built assessment beds for rough sleepers in the City of London and is an important part of the Corporation's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The contract will be let initially for a period of three years and includes an option to extend for a further two years.

Adult Social Care – Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection Readiness

4. The Commissioning Team is working with colleagues across the Department on the preparation of the possible CQC Adult Social Care Inspection, which is to be completed by selected local authorities. The team is working to compile evidence against the inspection criteria to demonstrate the high-quality provision delivered across the breadth of the commissioned services and placements. This work includes evidencing the required policies, processes, procedures, and reporting to ensure safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led care.

Adult Social Care – Community Equipment and Telecare

5. The Commissioning Team continues to work with the London Community Equipment Consortium, managed by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Councils, to provide community equipment to 20 London local authorities. The service enables the City to provide home-based services supported by the provision of minor aids and adaptations, community equipment and Telecare. The Commissioning Team are working with the Consortium on a performance improvement plan to ensure that the City's equipment needs are fulfilled in a timely way.
6. The Telecare service element of the contract is being delivered to an improved standard. The wider review and redesign of the Telecare service, which incorporates the supply and installation of equipment and the responder service, will commence in 2024–25. This will ensure that the Department completes the required infrastructure and equipment installations to facilitate the transition from analogue to digital technologies. As part of this process, the team are working closely with the London Community Equipment Consortium and the provider, who are in the process of arranging a meeting with BT Openreach and Virgin Media, to obtain a clear understanding of the switchover project and the timelines.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Holiday Activities and Food Programme

7. The Holiday Activities and Food Programme provides healthy food and activities for children and young people who are eligible for free school meals.

The programme continues to be offered over school holidays, with the latest occurring over the Christmas period. SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets delivered sessions at the Golden Lane Community Centre and at Portsoken Community Centre, with food provided by local enterprise, All Season Foods. The sessions were attended by 50 children. The City's 2024 grant allocation of £25,000 has been confirmed by the Department for Education to sustain delivery over the Easter, summer, and Christmas Holidays. A review of the programme is being completed, with the aim of expanding the offer to families in the City known to be on the threshold of free school meals, who would benefit from the full-day provision delivered from the Aldgate School.

Commissioning and Partnerships – City Connections

8. The City Connections Service, delivered by Age UK East London, provides several interlinked services to City residents and workers, providing early intervention support to reduce the need to access statutory services. An evaluation of the current provision, which included substantial consultation with service users and partners, has been completed, leading to recommendations that the service be provided in a different way moving forward. This builds on the successes of the current contract, which expires in March 2024. The future service model is set out below:
 - Carers Service: Consultation completed through the development of Carers Strategy supported separating this element of the service to ensure that it was delivered by a provider experienced in delivering carers services. Consultation continues in the development of the specification for the new service. In the short term, to allow a new contract to be procured, the carers support service will continue to be provided by the Tower Hamlets Carers Centre.
 - Forget Me Not Café: This Golden Lane group, formerly the Memory Group, is very popular, attracting mainly older residents. Feedback from users was 100% positive, with partners confirming that the service prevents social isolation, particularly through enabling people to eat together. The new contract will be for a potential four-year period and will enable a group to meet weekly.
 - Community Assessments: These take the form of initial and follow-up assessments for individuals, with an agreed action plan for non-medical support. The number of people referred to City Connections is generally declining as the primary care social prescribing service has become more embedded. Officers plan to transfer this service to the social prescribing service contract, led by the Integrated Care Board and delivered by Family Action until 2027. This will make best use of the care navigator network which has developed significantly. This will also enable better joined-up work with primary care and the food pantry, also led by Family Action. Age UK East London will continue the community assessments for approximately six months while the contract variation is agreed.

- **Care Navigator Service:** This service supports people from hospital settings with short-term information and support to help them settle back into the community after hospital discharge. It aims to reduce and narrow hospital re-admittance as part of the prevention agenda in the Care Act 2014. Approximately 30 users per quarter use the service. The independent nature of the role is seen as vital to encouraging positive relationships with primary health, and regular co-location working with adult social care has facilitated good working relationships and an improvement to services. This service will be procured in the next six months, with the service continuing to be provided by City Connections in the meantime.
- **Activities:** Current activities provided by City Connections include meditation sessions, virtual tours, Portsoken community group, Golden Lane Thursday Club, Walking Group, IT support sessions, welfare calls and one-off trips. The type and regularity of activities provided have been responsive to resident needs and are flexible, with sessions ceasing where there is low demand. There are other diverse and well-attended activities run by partners in the City as early intervention and prevention, including Age UK City of London which is grant funded to provide a number of activities across the City. Healthwatch City of London is starting to map the activities that fall under the category 'social isolation' to give a better picture of the current provision and gaps, which will inform a procurement for further activities. Age UK East London will continue the current activities for approximately six months while the mapping and subsequent procurement is undertaken.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Golden Lane Leisure Centre

9. The contract with Fusion Lifestyle for the management of Golden Lane Leisure Centre is to be extended for a further year, until 31 March 2025. Discussions are being progressed to seek as much assurance on the commitment to the ongoing partnership, to minimise the risk of a premature closure, given the Department's inability to commit to a longer-term arrangement. The future procurement strategy and service delivery will be informed through the completion of the facility options appraisal, which explores the available options for delivering leisure provision in the Square Mile, including the associated revenue and capital costs. Options will be presented to Members of this Committee following the conclusion of that process and Member direction and decision on a future funding strategy for a preferred option.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Universal Youth and Play

10. The Universal Youth and Play Service, delivered by SocietyLinks, which provides services for 8–19 year-olds (25 years for SEND) has been extended for a further two years until 31 March 2026. SocietyLinks are a London Youth Accredited provider that has delivered some high-quality initiatives throughout the first two years of the service. Highlights include the positive outcomes

when working with young people from Afghanistan as part of the resettlement programme, the high engagement and participation among girls in the East of the City, and the popular community events delivered across City's estates.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and the City Youth Forum

11. The existing contract with Prospects to deliver IAG and the City Youth Forum ran until January 2024. The Commissioning Team will be completing a review of the service and the needs of young people living and studying in the City, with a view to maximising the impact of commissioned youth provision.

Responsible procurement

12. In leading much of the Department's procurement activity, the Commissioning Team continues to ensure that the Corporation's Responsible Procurement commitments are delivered through our supply chains. The commitments, which are reflected in the procurement and monitoring of services, include climate action, supplier diversity, equity and inclusion, human rights, meaningful work-related opportunities, and social value outcomes. The team are working to provide case studies of good practice to be included within the Responsible Procurement annual impact review.

DCCS Sourcing Plan 2023–24

13. The Department's Sourcing Plan (see Appendix 2) details the service contracts over £100,000 in total value which may be procured in the financial year 2024–25. The Sourcing Plan includes contracts that have the provision to, and that are likely to, be extended.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The Commissioning Team's sourcing plans and work plan are centred around the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Departmental Business Plan objectives, most notably the aim to "Contribute to a flourishing society".

Financial Implications

15. The Commissioning Team's work will continue to focus on delivering value for money in the financial year 2024–25.

Resource Implications

16. Not applicable.

Legal Implications

17. Not applicable.

Risk Implications

18. Not applicable.

Equalities Implications

19. Equalities considerations are included throughout the commissioning and management of services. Providers are required to report on the service's key performance indicators and assess the take-up and use of services from target groups.

Climate Implications

20. Not applicable.

Security Implications

21. Not applicable.

Conclusion

22. The team continues to implement a strategic approach to commissioning, prioritising workload and effective partnership, working across the range of services and contracts. The team aims to manage service performance and ensure high-quality outcomes for City residents. The team will prioritise the procurement of the services set out within the DCCS sourcing plan.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – DCCS Contracts Register (non-public)
- Appendix 2 – DCCS Sourcing Plan (non-public)

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