

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Community and Children’s Service Committee	Dated: 11/11/2024
Subject: Update on the Partnership for Young London and Request for Extension of Service Level Agreement	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes 	Providing Excellent Services. Diverse Engaged Communities.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services, DCCS	
Report author: Zoe Dhami, Strategy and Projects Officer, DCCS	

Summary

This report updates Members on the work and achievements of the Partnership for Young London (PYL) since the last review and seeks approval for an extension of the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the City of London Corporation and PYL for an additional five-year term, with the option for annual reviews.

The City of London Corporation plays a pivotal role in providing corporate and operational support to PYL, enabling the organisation to focus on its core mission of improving outcomes for young Londoners. The proposed extension will ensure this support continues, facilitating PYL's impactful work in youth engagement, policy influence, and capacity building across London's youth sector.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the work and impact of the Partnership for Young London over 2023 - 2024, as outlined in this report.
- Approve the extension of the Service Level Agreement with the Partnership for Young London for a further five years, subject to annual reviews.

Main Report

Background

1. Partnership for Young London (PYL) is a charity organisation based in London that focuses on improving the lives of young people by supporting youth services, policies, and initiatives across the city. The organisation works with local authorities, voluntary sectors, and businesses to influence policy and ensure young people's voices are heard.
2. The PYL has been an integral partner in the City of London Corporation's efforts to improve outcomes for young people across London. Since 2014, the City of London Corporation has provided key corporate services through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that allows PYL to focus on its strategic objectives. These services include HR support, IT assistance, fiscal management, and office space provision, which have been essential in ensuring that PYL can operate effectively and dedicate its resources to supporting young people.

Role of the City of London Corporation

3. The City of London Corporation plays a critical role in the success of PYL by providing essential services through the SLA, which includes:
 - **HR Support:** Recruitment, payroll management, and employee-related services that ensure PYL can maintain a productive and well-managed team.
 - **IT Support:** Providing technical support, troubleshooting, and managing PYL's IT infrastructure, including email services and network backups, enabling smooth day-to-day operations.
 - **Financial Management:** Managing procurement, payroll, invoicing, and financial reporting, which ensures that PYL remains financially compliant. PYL completed all its financial accounting and audit arrangements.
 - **Office and Facilities Management:** Providing office space and operational support, such as desk services, allowing PYL to have a functional base for its work.
4. The provision of the services above are a Benefit in Kind, as they are provided at a rate of £10k per annum, which is below a commercial rate. These services allow PYL to focus on its core mission of supporting young people while the City ensures that the organisation's corporate and operational needs are met.

Current Position

5. The current SLA with PYL is set to expire at the end of the 2024-2025 financial year. Extending this agreement for an additional five years, with annual reviews, will allow for continued collaboration and support of PYL's impactful work. The services provided by the City of London Corporation are fundamental to ensuring that PYL can operate effectively, enabling the organisation to focus its efforts on youth-focused services, training, and policy initiatives without the burden of managing corporate operations independently.
6. Over the last three years PYL has trained over 300 youth workers, and 850 youth sector leads on trauma informed practice and adolescent safeguarding training. PYL communicates policy and practice news to over 3500 youth sector leads across London. PYL's work has expanded to include:
 - youth-led research on health inequalities
 - youth work in housing, and
 - supporting care leavers.
7. Notable initiatives include collaboration with the NHS on youth health engagement and partnerships with major housing providers to ensure young people's voices are heard in housing policy decisions. Youth policy and practice is influenced regionally through the Pan London Children in Care Council, the Young Londoners Coalition with Health, GLA, London Councils, and Funders. PYL is represented on the National Youth Policy Advisory Board with Government Departments, the National Youth Agency and National Funders influencing policy and mandates on young people.

Options

8. **Approve** the extension of the SLA for five years, subject to annual reviews. This option would ensure the ongoing provision of essential services to PYL, allowing them to continue their impactful work without interruption.
9. The financial commitment to the City of London Corporation is **£10,000 per year**, covering IT support, fiscal management, HR services, and office space, as outlined in the current SLA. These costs are subject to annual reviews and inflation adjustments. This arrangement allows PYL to benefit from cost-effective operational support without needing to manage these services independently, potentially saving administrative overhead and ensuring streamlined operations. Additional costs will be met by PYL in terms of ad-hoc services or repairs (e.g., IT equipment repairs or additional licenses), these are not met by the City of London Corporation.
10. The primary risk associated with approving the SLA extension is the potential for increasing costs due to inflation, as the annual service charge is subject to review.
11. **Do not approve** the extension. This would reduce financial commitments for the City of London Corporation.

12. The City of London Corporation has been a strategic partner for PYL, providing stable, reliable services that allow PYL to focus on its youth engagement work. Therefore, ending this partnership may diminish PYL's operational efficiency and weaken long-term collaboration opportunities with the City.

Proposals

13. It is proposed that the Committee approve the five-year extension of the SLA with the PYL, with the provision for annual reviews. This will enable PYL to continue its role in supporting youth policy development and service delivery across London while ensuring that the agreement remains flexible to adapt to future needs.
14. If the SLA is not extended, PYL would be required to find alternative providers for the essential services currently provided by the City. This could lead to higher operational costs, as securing independent contracts for IT, HR, finance, and office services is likely to exceed the current fixed annual charge of £10,000. Additionally, there is a risk of operational disruptions during the transition, which could impact PYL's ability to deliver on its mission of supporting young Londoners.
15. If the SLA is not extended, the City of London Corporation risks losing a highly effective partnership that aligns with its strategic goals of supporting communities and young people across London. The City has invested considerable resources into providing essential services to PYL. By withdrawing from this agreement, the City would not only lose the immediate operational relationship but also the long-term strategic benefits that this partnership has fostered.
16. One of the key risks for the Corporation is the potential reputational impact. The City of London Corporation has positioned itself as a leader in supporting London's youth through PYL's work. By ending this agreement, the City could be seen as withdrawing support from an organisation that directly impacts the lives of thousands of young people, including the most vulnerable populations, such as care leavers and those affected by health inequalities. This could negatively affect the City's standing as a forward-thinking body that is dedicated to fostering inclusive growth and supporting the younger generation.
17. In addition to reputational risks, there are also financial considerations. While the direct cost of providing services to PYL is capped at £10,000 per year, the City would need to consider the broader financial implications of disengaging from this partnership. PYL has facilitated the flow of additional funding and resources into London's youth sector, including securing grants and forming partnerships with other key stakeholders like the GLA, NHS, and housing sectors. The City of London Corporation benefits indirectly from these relationships through its association with PYL, as this partnership enables the City to demonstrate its involvement in effective, impactful youth initiatives without bearing the full cost of these programs. Disengaging could mean losing out on these broader financial

and social returns, as PYL may turn to other local authorities or private sector organisations for support, creating missed opportunities for future collaboration.

18. Furthermore, discontinuing the SLA poses a risk to the City's leadership in public-private partnerships. The City has long prided itself on being a convening power, leveraging its resources to influence policy and practice across London. The SLA with PYL is a tangible example of this leadership, and by stepping back from this role, the City could weaken its influence over key youth-focused initiatives that align with broader corporate and social objectives. The City risks losing its strategic voice in the development of youth policies and programs that directly affect the capital's future workforce and community well-being.
19. The City of London's corporate services are well-integrated, allowing for a streamlined and efficient relationship with PYL. If PYL must rely on multiple vendors, the level of coordination and service quality could suffer, which may indirectly reflect on the City's previous role as a reliable partner.
20. In summary, not extending the SLA risks damaging the City of London Corporation's reputation, reducing its influence in youth-focused policy, and missing future strategic opportunities, all while increasing the likelihood of operational inefficiencies and disengagement from key stakeholders across London.

Key Data

21. Since 2021, PYL has made significant strides in representing young Londoners through various advisory boards, training young people as peer researchers, and facilitating partnerships across sectors to improve youth services. Some key achievements include:

- 145 young Londoners represented across 10+ youth advisory boards.
- Training 200 young people as peer researchers, influencing policy and practice.
- Facilitating 40+ training sessions and events, engaging over 3,500 youth sector leaders.
- Weekly youth policy bulletins reaching 3,500 youth sector leads.
- Partnerships with key institutions, including the GLA, NHS, London Councils and housing sectors, to address the needs of young Londoners.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications: The proposal supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 (Providing Excellent Services, and Diverse Engaged Communities) by

enhancing services for young people, fostering community engagement, and driving policy change through youth involvement.

Financial implications: The proposed extension will continue under the existing financial arrangements, subject to an annual review in line with inflation and service adjustments as required.

Legal implications: SLA has been thoroughly reviewed by the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department to ensure compliance with all relevant legal frameworks. This review confirms that the SLA meets the City of London Corporation's legal obligations, including those under the Localism Act 2011 and other applicable legislation. The agreement is structured to safeguard both parties' interests, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and the terms of service provision. There are no significant legal risks associated with extending the SLA, and the provisions for annual reviews ensure ongoing compliance with evolving legal standards and operational needs.

Equalities implications: The work of PYL directly supports equalities objectives by amplifying the voices of young people, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, and ensuring their needs are met in public services.

Climate implications: None.

Security implications: None.

Conclusion

22. The Partnership for Young London has demonstrated its ability to deliver impactful, youth-led services that align with the City of London Corporation's objectives. The support provided by the City of London through the SLA has been crucial to this success. Extending the SLA will ensure the continued delivery of these programs, benefiting young Londoners and supporting the Corporation's strategic priorities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Partnership for Young London Service Level Agreement.

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