

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Community and Children's Services	Dated: 11/11/2024
Subject: Commissioning Update	Public report For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024–29 outcomes • provides statutory duties 	Diverse Engaged Communities, Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	NA
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Greg Knight, Head of Commissioning, Community and Children's Services

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
- the contents of the DCCS Contracts Register (Appendix 1)
- the contents of the DCCS Sourcing Plan 24–25 Progress (Appendix 2)
- the Adult Social Care Commissioning Overview Report (Appendix 3)
- the Children's Social Care Commissioning Overview Report (Appendix 4)

Main Report

Background

1. The Commissioning Team currently manages 139 contracts, (not including social care placement contracts), with an approximate total value of £36 million. The Department's contracts register is provided (Appendix 1). The report provides progress against the Department's Sourcing Plan 2024–25 for contracts over £100,000 in value (Appendix 2).

Commissioned Services Highlights

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

Adult Social Care – Carers Support Service

3. Following completion of a competitive procurement process, Imago has been appointed to deliver the City's Carers Support Service. The mobilisation of the service is progressing well. The Commissioning Team and Imago wrote to all service users and held drop-in sessions to give carers the opportunity to discuss the new service. Imago are attending several partnership meetings, including the Healthwatch Annual General Meeting and meetings with the City Corporation's Adult Social Care Team. The recommissioning was co-produced with carers throughout each stage. This consultation will continue, with discussions exploring how carers will be involved in the monitoring of the contract performance.

Adult Social Care – Accelerating Reform Funding (ARF) Carers Project

4. The City has been allocated £49,200 as part of the Department of Health and Social Care ARF, which sets out the priorities for innovation and scaling in Adult Social Care, including identifying, recognising and supporting unpaid carers. The project will establish a Hospital Carers Worker (HCW) in each of the seven main hospitals within the North East London (NEL) region, who will assist carers in accessing their respective services. The team is working collaboratively with the NEL authorities, most notably London Borough of Newham, which will oversee the HCW based at St Bartholomew's Hospital. Age UK East London has been identified as the preferred provider, as they currently deliver Newham's Carers Service. The City's Care Navigator service will also be involved as it has previously delivered the Carers Service in the City. The ARF Carers Project is scheduled to start in February 2025.

Adult Social Care – City Advice

5. The City Advice Service – which provides general advice for residents and City workers, particularly for benefits, housing, debt and legal advice, currently delivered by Toynbee Hall – has been extended for a further year. The current

contract now expires in October 2025. An in-depth independent review of the service is currently being completed, exploring progress against the service aims and objectives, key performance indicators and identifying any gaps or emerging needs, with a view to inform recommissioning of a new service.

Adult Social Care – Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection

6. The Commissioning Team continues to work with colleagues across the Department in preparation for a CQC Adult Social Care Inspection. The team has compiled evidence against the inspection criteria to demonstrate the high-quality provision delivered across the breadth of the commissioned services and placements (Appendix 3). This work seeks to evidence the required policies, processes, procedures, and reporting to ensure the delivery of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led care.

Adult Social Care – Telecare Digital Switchover

7. The new revised date, set by the Government, to transfer landline customers from their analogue system to new digital technology is now January 2027. The Commissioning Team is working closely with telecoms network providers, and commissioned telecare equipment and call monitoring providers, as part of the switchover process. The first stage involves City residents in receipt of telecare being identified by the network providers to ensure that their existing telecoms systems remain in place and are correctly transferred and robustly tested. This process will be managed separately from the rollout to mainstream residential and commercial customers. A Data Sharing Agreement and Data Impact Assessment (DIA) developed by the Local Government Association, has been used alongside the Corporation's DIA.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – Outreach Service

8. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Outreach Service recommissioning options appraisal was presented to the Department Leadership Team in October 2024. Based on uncertainties and implications associated with Government funding, which constitutes approximately 30% of the service budget, the recommendation is to extend the service for a further 12 months. This approach aims to provide continuity of service, aligning to the anticipated Government funding position, and allow for development of a new long-term service which aligns to any new Government initiatives.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – Quality Assurance Framework

9. Colleagues from the Commissioning Team and Service Area developed and introduced a new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Quality Assurance Framework Self-Assessment tool, to be used to complete of an audit

of commissioned accommodation-based services. The audit programme will require providers to complete a self-assessment and evidence against a range of criteria to support service improvements and action plans. Assessment criteria includes health and safety, quality management, employment, service user involvement, safeguarding and data security.

Children's Social Care – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Inspection

10. The Commissioning Team supported the Department's Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care in September 2024. The team provided the Commissioning Overview Report (Appendix 4), detailing the team's role and responsibilities. The report also includes an overview of the quality assurance arrangements for commissioned services and placements.

Children's Social Care – Sufficiency Strategy

11. The Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers was updated in September 2024 and details the Department's approach to securing accommodation for the children who come into our care, and for those leaving care. Through delivery of the Strategy and the detailed approaches to securing placements, the Department ensures that the statutory duty is met. The Strategy runs until 2027, and will be reviewed annually, with the next review in September 2025. Members of the Commissioning Team were interviewed by Ofsted on the Quality Assurance arrangements of placements as part of the inspection.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Universal Youth and Play Service

12. A range of activities were delivered as part of the Universal Youth and Play Service throughout the summer holidays. Delivery included regular sessions at Golden Lane and Portsoken Community Centres, summer BBQs, Community Mosaic project, trips to the seaside and TopGolf.

13. The provider of the service, SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets, has been accredited with the Level 1 Trusted Standard recognising the excellent work it does as a third-sector organisation in England. In achieving this status, the organisation has demonstrated that it has the legal obligations, systems and structures in place to protect the rights of service users and employees. The accreditation was determined by being assessed against 11 quality areas: governance; planning; leadership and management; user-centred service; managing people; learning and development; managing money; managing resources; external communications; working with others; and assessing outcomes and impact.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Holiday and Food Programme

14. The Commissioning Team continues to coordinate the Holiday and Food Programme for children in receipt of benefits related free school meals (FSM). SocietyLinks Tower Hamlets delivered sessions over Easter and the summer holidays at the Golden Lane Community Centre and Portsoken Community Centre, in addition to the Aldgate School delivering a programme for primary aged children. The programme was expanded to include City families who are on the threshold of FSM, who we know benefited from the service. All the children who participate receive a free lunch and the programme has received positive feedback from parents.
15. So far this financial year, 170 individual children and young people were engaged during the 22 days of service delivery. Of these, 73 were primary aged and in receipt of FSM, and 37 were secondary aged and in receipt of FSM. Four sessions will be delivered during the Christmas holidays, each with availability for up to 32 children and young people to attend.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Golden Lane Leisure Centre

16. Following confirmation to proceed with the refurbishment of the Golden Lane Leisure Centre, the Commissioning Team are working with colleagues to complete due diligence on UK Leisure Framework. The framework allows for procurement and the direct appointment of a development partner, Alliance Leisure, for scoping, design, refurbishment, construction and the development of leisure centres across the UK public sector.
17. The Commissioning Team appointed TA6, the marketing agency of Alliance Leisure, to complete an opportunity analysis report. This will involve stakeholder consultation to inform the vision, priorities and scope of works. This initial programme will run throughout Quarter 4 of 2024.

Commissioning and Partnerships – Healthwatch

18. A new contract has been awarded directly to Healthwatch City of London, the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in the City. The service aims to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services, and to speak out on their behalf. The initial contract period runs until September 2027 and includes an optional extension until 2029.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. Strategic implications – Service delivery supports the achievement of the Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024–2029, most notably Diverse Engaged Communities, and Providing Excellent Services.

20. Financial implications – None.

21. Resource implications – None.

22. Legal implications – None.

23. Risk implications – None.

24. Equalities implications – Equalities considerations are included throughout the commissioning and management of services.

25. Climate implications – The Commissioning Team continues to ensure that the Corporation’s Responsible Procurement commitments are delivered through our supply chains by service providers.

26. Security implications – None.

Conclusion

27. The DCCS Commissioning 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 continues to prioritise the procurement of the services set out within the DCCS sourcing plan.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – DCCS Contracts Register
- Appendix 2 – DCCS Sourcing Plan 24–25 Progress
- Appendix 3 – Adult Social Care Commissioning Overview Report
- Appendix 4 – Children’s Social Care Commissioning Overview Report

Greg Knight

Head of Commissioning, Community and Children’s Services

T: 020 7332 1173

E: greg.knight@cityoflondon.gov.uk