

**Report to:** Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships

**ate:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008

**Report of:** Chief Executive

**Report No:**

**Contact Officer:** Kelly Warriner

**Tele No:** Ext 1087

**Report Title:** **Bolton Lads and Girls Club – Future Support Arrangements**

**Confidential / Non Confidential:** This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a new, streamlined approach to working with, and supporting Bolton Lads & Girls Club.

**Recommendations:** The Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships is requested to:

- i. Approve the new streamlined approach to supporting Bolton Lads & Girls Club.
- ii. Approve in principle the development of an overarching grant agreement between the Council and Bolton Lads & Girls Club – the detailed agreement to be delegated to the Chief Executive.

**Decision:**

**Background Doc(s):**

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leader / Executive Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

**Summary:**

This report details a new streamlined approach to supporting the work of Bolton Lads and Girls Club. It proposes one contract with one named contact within the Council that will streamline the Council's financial support to the club, but will also streamline its relationship with one named contact for the agreement.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a new approach to future financial support arrangements for Bolton Lads & Girls Club (BL&GC)

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Executive Member will be aware that Bolton Lads & Girls Club (BL&GC) is a key partner organisation of the Council. Established in 1889, the club provided safe leisure time for young lads, especially those working in the local mills. The idea was an instant success and the club continued to grow and grow, providing new positive opportunities for young lads and later also girls. The club continued to build on this success and in the early 2000's outgrew its premises in Bark Street. Following extensive consultation and immense efforts of many people, brand new premises were opened in 2002 – funded by £1.1m raised by staff, patrons, club members and businesses together with £4m from Sport England.

- 2.2 BL&GC is nationally acclaimed – 'Children's Champion' Best Lottery Funded Project 2004, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors 2004 Best New Community Building, and numerous awards in recognition of the mentoring work done through the club including a Cabinet Office Gold Start Award. The grant award from Sport England was the largest voluntary sector lottery sports grant in the country. Built on a brownfield site in the town centre, the facilities at BL&GC are fitted to a very high standard and include:

- A large sports hall, fully equipped gym, indoor climbing wall, all weather football pitch and a boxing gym.
- A performing arts studio, cyber café and chill out area with TV's and pool table.
- A tuck shop and a hot meal café offering affordable meals.
- A Connexions room – where Connexions advisers offer specialist information, advice and guidance service for all young people.
- A variety of flexible spaces used for mentoring

- 2.3 The club has some impressive characteristics and undertakes a wide range of projects/services:

- Over 3,000 visits per week (previously 600 visits at their Bark Street premises), the majority of whom are aged 9 – 19 years old.
- Over 70% of users are from the borough's most disadvantaged areas within a four to five mile radius of the club.
- 14% of users are from minority groups.
- The club is open whenever young people are not in school – from 3.30pm to 10pm on weekdays, at weekends and during school holidays. The club works with schools to ensure maximum usage and enhance the extended services offer.
- Residential and outreach opportunities with specific activities for black and minority ethnic (BME) communities for example the Just for Girls project which offers activities for over 150 Muslim girls each Sunday afternoon. The club also supports younger children, disabled young people, girls and families.
- It employs over 40 full time and 60 part time people including youth workers, sports coaches, specialist substance misuse and Connexions workers, supported by a further 320 volunteers who are recruited and trained by the Club.
- Prices are kept affordable – 40p for a four hour session and further subsidies are available for the more disadvantaged.

- 2.4 The club successfully delivers a number of projects and activities for children and young people; these include youth clubs, the Deaf Club, Independence Group and That Radio Thing to name a few. More specifically, the Council works in partnership with BL&GC to deliver a package of one to one support for young people with complex needs by funding trained mentors to work with up to 20 of the most vulnerable young people known to the Council. This has enhanced the relationship between the Council and the club, but most importantly has improved outcomes for young people referred, as all young people are supported through their mentor and are linked with positive

activities within the club. The project is successfully engaging with hard to reach young people who would not normally access mainstream services, seeing them re-enter education and reducing the number of young people requiring intensive mental health services.

- 2.5 Building on this success the club is working closely with the Council to develop a specialist looked after children pilot mentoring scheme. This will establish 36 specialist mentoring relationships between adult volunteers and young people aged 11-15 years. As part of the Council's role as 'corporate parent', volunteers have been sought from the Council's staff with successful applicants being given time off to attend training. The scheme will encourage young people to become involved in positive leisure activities and provide them with the encouragement and support to have high expectations for their own futures.
- 2.6 The Youth Enterprise Academy funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) was launched in summer 2007 and is giving some of Bolton's most disadvantaged young people an opportunity to experience enterprise in an exciting, attractive and practical form. This builds on the club's strengths of being a place young people want to go to and also to benefit from the club's unrivalled links with the local business community. This project provides a purpose built venue for activity coupled with a programme that will empower young people to develop and test business ideas, learn new skills in a business setting and meet with positive role models from the business community. This project is an important aspect of measures to address the comparatively low levels of enterprise and business start-up within Bolton.

### **3. COUNCIL'S PRESENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BOLTON LADS & GIRLS CLUB**

- 3.1 The Council's financial support to the club has been provided through a range of funding sources, often through external funding, and across different Council departments. This support has been either through grant aid, or has been commissioned by the Council to provide specific services. Overall, over the past two years there has been approximately £300,000 revenue per annum provided to operate around twenty individual projects at the club. There have also been two separate capital projects, funded through NRF to support the extension of the mentoring projects' requirements and the Youth Enterprise Academy.

### **4. POTENTIAL NEW APPROACH**

- 4.1 Following a review of the level of activity at the club, and in particular the Council's/Partnership funds which are supporting projects, it is proposed that a more streamlined approach be put in place to support the positive work of the club, and to enable them to contribute more effectively to meeting outcomes in the Borough's Community Strategy – Bolton: Our Vision 2007-2017 and the Children's Plan. This streamlined approach could be in the form of three categories of funding:

- 1) **Annual Grant Aid (see 4.2 below)**
- 2) **Commissioned Work (see 4.3 below)**
- 3) **Grant Programme (see 4.4 below)**

- 4.2 An annual grant from the Council could be provided by the Council, so that the club has some financial security, in the same way as the 'Big 10' grant aid to voluntary organisations providing general/boroughwide activity. This may develop into a three year arrangement upon negotiation with the club – an approach which is being developed with other voluntary and community groups which receive revenue support from the Council currently via an annual service level agreement. The grant aid, which could be made available on an annual continuing basis, would consist of the following:

Independent Advocacy Scheme	£17,200
Independence Group for Young People with Disabilities	£11,212
Part Time Sessional Youth Worker	£4,187
Super Mentoring Project	£20,000
Commissioned – PAYP Holiday Provision	£9,260*
Connexions (NEET) Reduction Project	£25,000*

Staff Support from Carers Grant	£9,600*	* Area Based Grant
Accreditation Project	£33,549	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£130,008</b>	

Where projects are funded through Area Based Grant, resources could only be agreed up to a maximum of three years. The Council would put in place an agreed monitoring system to monitor performance and spend and future funding would be dependent upon performance.

- 4.3 Other funding may be available to BL&GC, but would not necessarily be available on a continuing annual basis. Specific pieces of work will be commissioned as appropriate by the Council, dependent upon needs and resources available within service departments. This commissioning arrangement would be managed by the Council's named 'relationship manager' a single point of contact for the club. Service departments will produce detailed project specifications outlining what they are seeking to deliver and achieve – BL&GC will be asked to respond to the specification in the form of a delivery proposal which if accepted and agreed will form part of the overall agreement with the club.
- 4.4 BL&GC currently deliver a Looked After Children Mentoring Scheme which was funded up to March 2008 from the Rainer Trust. The Club has used its own funds to continue funding the project up to June 2008 with Area Based Grant funding the project until March 2009. At the end of the calendar year, project performance will be reviewed and future funding will be considered.
- 4.5 As with other organisations within the borough, further opportunities will be available for BL&GC to apply for grant aid from various grant programmes operated by the Council, its partners/partnerships or external agencies.

## **5. ONE CONTRACT / ONE CONTACT**

- 5.1 It is also considered advisable to develop one overarching contract/service level agreement with BL&GC which sets out the key objectives and outcomes that the Council wishes to secure from the club – this will be linked to national and local priorities, for example, the Every Child Matters Agenda and narrowing the gap, in return for the annual grant. A detailed grant agreement between the Council and BL&GC will be developed under delegated powers and will set out key objectives and outcomes together with a detailed service specification and financial schedule outlining the duration and regularity of payments.
- 5.2 The new contract/service level agreement will be administered by staff within the Chief Executive's Department who will act as the main contact on behalf of the Council. That person will liaise with a named contact at BL&GC but will also be kept aware of any issues from Council departments in relation to services carried out by BL&GC. This approach will help the club in its dealings with the Council, and will also help the Council to integrate the work undertaken with the club. Due to the nature of the work, significant contact will be maintained with Children's Services. Specific projects (which would be detailed in the grant agreement) would continue to have named lead officers dealing with the detail, but within the framework identified.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The Executive Member for Strategy and External Relationships is requested to:
- i. Approve the new streamlined approach to supporting Bolton Lads & Girls Club.
  - ii. Approve in principle the development of an overarching grant agreement between the Council and Bolton Lads & Girls Club – the detailed agreement to be delegated to the Chief Executive.