

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2473

Title: NFL Flag Football pilot

Executive Summary:

MD2265 approved the expenditure of £45m between 2018-2021 to be invested into the Young Londoners Fund, with £3m allocated specifically to Sport Unites to deliver aspirational and positive activities to empower young people through sports.

The proposed partnership project with the National Football League (NFL) aligns with the scope of the Sport Unites strand of the Young Londoners Fund in providing positive sporting activities for young people. This decision seeks approval to award funding of up to £50,000 to the NFL to deliver two pilot projects. The NFL will also contribute £50,000 to this project.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Team London & Community Sport approves expenditure of £50,000 in the form of grant funding (£35,000 in 2020/21 and £15,000 in 2021/22) under the Sport Unites element of the Young Londoners Fund (approved under MD2265), comprising:

- 1) Up to £30,000 to fund the NFL Flag Football and mentoring programme
- 2) Up to £20,000, to fund a community organisation and programme of American Flag Football focusing on young women and girls. This includes upskilling the community organisation to deliver American Flag Football projects in the future.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

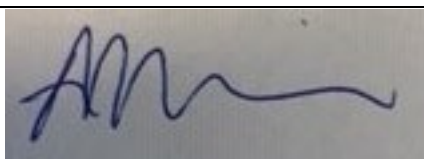
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Alice Wilcock

Position: Assistant Director, Team London and Community Sport

Signature:



Date: 2 November 2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

Sport Unites

- 1.1. 'Sport Unites' is the Mayor's £5.8m community sport investment programme, approved under cover of MD2244 in March 2018. It focuses on delivering Social Integration outcomes – in line with 'All Of Us' – the Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration published in March 2018. This marks a shift away from focusing primarily on funding participation-centric community sport initiatives, towards using sport to deliver more complex social outcomes.
- 1.2. The Sport Unites programme was expanded with an additional £3m approved under MD2265 – Young Londoner's Fund. The Fund's objective is to provide aspirational and positive activities to empower young people. The Sport Unites strand of this funding aims to increase social integration and community cohesion through sport and physical activity initiatives. It focuses on specific needs and circumstances of young Londoners helping them to make positive choices and reach their potential.
- 1.3. Activities proposed under this decision fit within the strategic framework of the Young Londoners Fund:
 - pilot project 1 uses sport and mentoring to achieve positive behavioural outcomes, such as: improving aspirations, building resilience, challenging negative beliefs, with the intended end outcomes of reducing incidents and exclusions. These outcomes ultimately contribute to a reduced risk of involvement in crime and violence and positive opportunities for young people
 - pilot project 2 will upskill and work with a community partner to deliver positive activities via the medium of Flag Football for young women and girls, who are often excluded from sports. This project aims to achieve mental health and wellbeing focused outcomes, as well as an improvement in resilience and leaderships skills in line with the objectives of Young Londoners Fund

COVID-19 Recovery

- 1.4. This project maps directly onto the Children & Young People Recovery Mission for London, A New Deal for Young People as well as Building Stronger Communities Mission:
 - it incorporates integrated mentoring sessions delivered by trained facilitators with lived experience in this area
 - it upskills community partners, Academy staff, students and practitioners in an understanding and practical application of sport for social integration
 - it introduces young people to high-profile sporting role models and inspirational guest speakers throughout programme delivery
 - it focuses on young people's broader life skills, as well as their mental health and resilience

NFL Academy

- 1.5. The NFL Academy, opened in September 2019 and based at Barnet and Southgate College, is a major UK initiative by the NFL, which aims to use American Football to create life-changing opportunities for young people.

- 1.6. The NFL Academy offers student athletes aged 16-19 the opportunity to combine their academic education with a life skills programme and an intensive training in the sport, with the aim to create pathways into further education, employment and potentially an opportunity to study and play NCAA (the National Collegiate Athletic Association in the USA) college football.
- 1.7. The NFL will pilot this new programme, which brings together both sport and classroom activities, to explore the positive impact of their American Flag Football and mentoring programme on young people and local communities. This will be measured by social impact outcomes. The main focuses of their impact strategy are: inclusive, engaging, untraditional, and aspirational.
- 1.8. This programme will consist of two pilot projects exploring the capacity of the NFL's American Flag Football programme to engage young people and improve their life skills as well as physical and mental wellbeing.
- 1.9. Pilot 1 will work at up to six schools in Haringey (including Pupil Referral Units -PRUs) with young people (aged 12-16) at risk of exclusion receiving a combination of American Flag Football and mentoring sessions. The mentoring sessions will be run by UpskillU, an organization specialising in mentoring and therapeutic intervention for young people at risk. UpskillU have been selected to deliver this work due to their long-standing experience in the field and their focus on employing trained mentors and facilitators with lived experience of the issues they address. The three-month programme will culminate in a celebration event co-delivered with the NFL Academy players.
- 1.10. UpskillU's 12 week group work programme called 'Exodus' will cover a range of issues such as knife crime, serious youth offending, gangs, grooming, county lines, and criminal exploitation; this will aim to challenge young people's perceptions and improve attendance, aspirations, and behaviour. Sessions will be delivered by trained facilitators and mentors with lived experience, as well as guest speakers with relevant experience (solicitors, Magistrates, former gang members, victims of crime etc).
- 1.11. Pilot 2 will work with a community organisation benefitting primarily young women and girls. This project will prioritise upskilling the community partner to introduce a sporting element to their work, and will enable them to deliver American Flag Football training, as well as engaging young women who are often excluded from sports and organised physical activity.
- 1.12. Both pilot projects will be monitored and evaluated by the NFL with support from the Sport Unites monitoring and evaluation partner, Infocus. Learnings will be used to assess the effectiveness of the intervention and to scope a prospective future larger scale partnership between the NFL and Sport Unites.
- 1.13. Alongside the GLA funding of £50,000, the NFL will also contribute £50,000, making a total programme budget of £100,000. The NFL will also deliver the pilot and use the learnings to scope further collaboration with the GLA. There will also be in-kind support provided, including support from the NFL Academy players.
- 1.14. The NFL are in a unique position to fulfil the outcomes of this programme. They have long-standing experience in delivering inclusive and non-traditional sports, which are accessible to participants with a variety of abilities, experiences, and skills, and American Flag Football is novel enough to present an equal playing field. The brand of the NFL is attractive to young participants and introduces them to high-profile sporting role models.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The overall aim of the project is to test the effectiveness of integrating the NFL flagship, American Flag Football and mentoring programme, to deliver outcomes including improving behaviour, reducing serious youth violence, improving mental wellbeing, and reducing inactivity.

2.2 Pilot 1 objectives:

- to deliver a launch event at the NFL Academy
- to partner up with up to 6 schools (and/or PRUs) in Haringey to deliver the American Flag Football and mentoring sessions
- to recruit up to 12 participants at each school, a majority of whom are deemed 'at risk' of exclusion, poor performance, or violence, so a total of up to 72 participants
- to train PE teachers and practitioners at schools to co-deliver the programme
- to deliver 12 sessions of American Flag Football and 12 sessions of the UpskillU programme at each school
- to engage NFL Academy students in project delivery and the final celebration event
- to monitor and evaluate the success of the pilot programme through participants' self-assessment surveys, as well as attitudinal KPIs assessment across areas of gang affiliation, healthy relationships, positive choices around life and future, victim awareness, family, personal safety, health and wellbeing

2.3 Pilot 2 objectives:

- to recruit a community partner working with young women and girls through an open procurement process
- to recruit a cohort of up to 70 (50 to 70 depending what is allowed according to government Covid-19 regulations and facilities) participants aged 13-18 with at least 80% female participants. There will be varying numbers in sessions, with some being made up of smaller participant groups but overall the total number of beneficiaries will take place in the 5-month programme.
- to upskill the community partner in delivering the NFL American Flag Football programme
- to devise a delivery plan with the community partner, including a programme of mentoring and wellbeing support
- to deliver a 5-month programme of activities with the community partner
- to monitor and evaluate the success of the pilot programme through participants' self-assessment surveys, including a scale-up strategy
- to deliver a festival/event to celebrate and showcase participants' achievements

2.4 Pilot 1 outputs:

- up to 6 schools in Haringey participate in the pilot
- up to 72 or up to 12 per school students take part in the programme, with majority deemed as lower socio-economic status or 'at-risk' (of exclusion, gang exploitation, or violence)
- 24 sessions take place at each school over 3 months: 12 UpskillU group work and 12 NFL Flag Football sessions. The UpskillU programme to include a group work programme covering a range of issues (including knife crime, gangs, grooming etc.), guest speaker presentations and a selection of group activities
- young people complete questionnaires evaluating their experience and attitudinal Key Performance Indicators are assessed against expected behaviour outcomes

2.5 Pilot 2 outputs:

- a community partner identified and upskilled

- a cohort of participants, including at least 80% women and girls, recruited
- a programme of activities and mentoring sessions takes place over 24 weeks
- a monitoring, evaluation and learning plan is devised
- a celebration event delivered at the end of project

2.6 Pilot 1 expected outcomes:

- reduction of serious youth violence is supported through challenging negative beliefs, developing victim empathy, building resilience, and ultimately behavioral changes
- young people's behavior is improved through improved attendance, reduced exclusion, reduced incidences, and increased aspirations
- a set of learnings is produced to assess the pilot's success and look at the potential to scale up the programme
- young people learn to play American Flag Football
- participants' mental wellbeing and activity levels are improved through participation in the NFL Flag Football programme.

2.7 Pilot 2 expected outcomes:

- community partner is able to deliver American Flag Football training to their beneficiaries in the future as part of their sustained offer
- young women's participation in Flag Football is increased
- improved levels of activity in groups previously classed as in- or under-active
- increased character-building and life skills, including emotional resilience and improved wellbeing reported
- learnings are produced to scale up the programme and deliver collaborative projects in the future.

3. Equality comments

3.1 The public-sector equality duty requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the "Equality Act") as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act comprise age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status.

3.2 The Sport Unites programme is open to all, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. The NFL pilot will adhere to these values and will therefore foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. American Flag Football in particular is famed as an extremely inclusive sport, accessible to all no matter their ability, or gender.¹

¹ According to the Walker Research conducted on the NFL Flag programme, "variety made NFL flag inclusive for more participants with different skillsets". This was evidenced by participants' comments praising the variety of roles and positions in this sport, making it accessible to a wider range of participants. Quantitative research has evidenced a 49/51% split of female and male participants.

- 3.3 Due to the nature of this proposed decision, improved opportunities for partaking in American Flag Football are expected for young women and girls, who are often excluded from sports participation. The second pilot specifically will focus on female participants, with an expectation to recruit at least 80% women and girls. The first pilot will focus on both male and female participants, ensuring a diverse range of Londoners are engaged.
- 3.4 Improved opportunities as well as wellbeing outcomes for young Londoners are expected as a result of the first pilot. The portfolio of school participants in the pilot will reflect London's diversity, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Involving PRUs in the school pilot will also ensure to provide positive opportunities for the most disadvantaged young people.
- 3.5 The community partner for the second pilot will be selected through open procurement process, ensuring equality of opportunity for community organisations and a relevant set of skills and expertise in working with young people, especially women and girls.

4. Other considerations

4.1 Risks

	Risk	Likelihood / Impact	Response / Mitigation
1	Change in the government Covid-19 guidance, rendering in person delivery impossible	Medium / High	At the moment, this project is in compliance with government restrictions allowing for non-contact Flag Football sessions to be delivered for young people in groups up to 30. Should these restrictions be tightened, we will be able to reduce cohort sizes, deliver the mentoring and in class elements online and delay some of the elements of the project.
2	Delay in partner recruitment for the second pilot due to excess demand or reduced capacity of external organisations due to the Covid-19 pandemic	Medium	There is a reasonable amount of flexibility embedded in the time taken to find a community organisation, including organisations' focus and target audience. The NFL and the GLA will employ the relevant stakeholder networks to advertise the opportunity (including London Sport, London Youth, and ukactive) broadly. The GLA will provide support for this exercise and will assist in scoring applications to ensure this is delivered on time.
3	Difficulty in finding 6 school partners.	Low	The NFL Academy has already established relevant links in the area, ensuring relevant school recruitment. If less than 6 partnering schools are engaged, the numbers of participants at each school can be increased

			to ensure the total number of beneficiaries stays the same.
4	The impact of these pilots will not be measured effectively enough to evaluate its success.	Low	We will ensure that the impact measurement of this project aligns with the wider Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework for Sport Unites, developed by its monitoring and evaluation partner, Infocus.
5	Young people are not committed to the programme and dropouts occur.	Low/Medium	Although, this is possible, especially when working with vulnerable young people who are already disengaged or at risk of exclusion, the mentoring element of the first pilot project is focusing specifically on improving young people's engagement and is delivered by an organisation with vast experience in the field. As for the second pilot – the organisation will have a steady audience of beneficiaries, and the aim of the pilot is precisely to test the effectiveness of the American Flag Football intervention and its ability to engage participants and improve their wellbeing.

- 4.2 This project is in line with the strategic objective of Sport Unites in its use of sport to achieve social change, namely improve social integration and relationships and achieve better physical and mental wellbeing for participants (reduce inactivity and improve mental health).
- 4.3 The Mayor's manifesto commitment refers directly to working "with London's football clubs and other major sports clubs to support and expand their vast capacity for making a positive impact in the community, especially with young people".
- 4.4 Both pilots fully align with the scopes and purposes of Young Londoners Fund in providing aspirational and positive activities to empower young people; divert them from crime and anti-social behaviour; and help them reach their potential. Pilot 1 uses sport and mentoring to achieve positive behavioural outcomes for young people at risk of exclusions, with the intended end outcomes of reducing incidents and exclusions. Pilot 2 aims to achieve mental health and wellbeing focused outcomes, as well as an improvement in resilience and leaderships skills for women and girls.
- 4.5 This project contributes to the COVID-19 recovery strategic framework:
- It maps directly onto the Children & Young People Recovery Mission for London, A New Deal for Young People, through the incorporation of mentoring sessions for young people delivered by facilitators with lived experience. It focuses on achieving health and wellbeing benefits for the participants, as well providing them with access to high-profile sporting role models.
 - It also contributes to the Building Stronger Communities Mission by upskilling community partners, Academy staff, students and practitioners in an understanding and practical application of sport for social integration
- 4.6 Partnership with the NFL further links to the Major Sports Events framework and the Mayoral commitment that events hosted in the capital should engage, include and benefit Londoners across the city.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.7 Due consideration has been given to any potential conflicts of interest within this project, however, none have been found.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is being sought for expenditure of £50,000 (£35,000 in 2020/21 and £15,000 in 2021/22) in the form of grant funding to the National Football League (NFL). This grant is to fund two pilot programmes: the NFL Flag Football and mentoring programme (£30,000); and the community organisation and programme of American Flag Football focusing on young women and girls (£20,000).
- 5.2 This expenditure of £50,000 will be funded by the YLF Sports Unites budget as per the profile stated above.
- 5.3 The NFL is also contributing £50,000 towards these pilot programmes.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Community Organisation recruitment for pilot 2	November 2020
Announcement	November 2020
Community partner and school training/upskilling	November 2020 - January 2021
Delivery Start Date (pilot 1 and 2)	January 2021
Delivery end pilot 1	April 2021
Delivery end pilot 2	June 2021
Evaluation and production of learning	April – June 2021
Project Closure:	July 2021

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form –NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Paulina Turcan has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 2 November 2020

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature

Ana Custodt

Date: 2 November 2020