

Subject:	Housing and Support for Young People aged 16-25 Joint Commissioning Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	25th September 2013		
Report of:	Executive Director, Environment, Development and Housing		
Contact Officer:	Narinder Sundar, Head of Housing Support		
	Name:	Jo Sharp, Commissioning Officer	Tel 293887
	Email:	narinder.sundar@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

The Housing and Support for Young People Needs Assessment undertaken in October 2012, identified the local housing and support needs for young people in the city. The Housing and Support Joint Commissioning Strategy for young people aged 16-25 specifically aims to:

- Increase the numbers of young people who are prevented from homelessness
- Ensure young people have a more positive transition to adulthood through the provision of a Young Peoples' accommodation and support pathway
- Better use of resources through a joint commissioning approach to accommodation and support for young people

The needs assessment found that an average of 234 16 and 17 year olds, and 917 18-25 year olds, approach Housing options per year for assistance on Housing needs (based on 2009-2012 figures). 16/17 year olds make up a total of 5% of customers accessing the Housing Options service. During 2009-2012 the average figure for 16/17 year olds with a dependent child was 11 per year, and 18-24 year olds was 254 per year.

The Housing Advice service, run by Sussex Central YMCA is often the first port of call for young people who need help with their housing. The Housing Advice service works with Housing Options Officer's and Children's Services (for under 18s) to assess the needs of the young person, and where possible support them to remain in their current accommodation, or make a referral for supported housing.

The Local Authority has a legal duty under the 1996 Housing Act to provide advice and assistance to prevent homelessness to individuals and households who find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness and provide accommodation to individuals and households who are deemed vulnerable and in priority need.

The recession and welfare benefits reform have had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable individuals and families, resulting in significant increases in homelessness and rough sleeping across the country. In Brighton and Hove, additional local demographic factors such as pressures from an expanding population, an acute shortage of affordable and suitable accommodation, high numbers of vulnerable individuals and households with high care and support needs (such as substance misuse, mental health and physical health needs), a large high-cost private rented sector and high benefit dependency, has had a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of many local residents, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

Locally, Housing Options managers have reported increased pressures this year with increasing numbers of younger people being referred for assistance with housing, with complex support needs.

The DCLG have been working with local authorities and national homelessness agencies to assist local authorities in improving their response to young people who need housing and support. This includes the creation of a 'Young Peoples' accommodation pathway'. The pathway is also promoted in the Ministerial Working Group Report 'Making Every Contact Count'. The pathway stressed the need for an integrated approach from agencies, working together to support young people.

Throughout the development of this strategy Brighton and Hove have been working with Youth Homelessness Advisor with the Department for Communities and Local Government, who has supported this process.

This is a joint strategy with Children's Services, to be presented at the Children and Young People Committee in October.

This strategy is linked to other strategies within Brighton and Hove City Council, to include;

- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Housing related Support Commissioning Strategy 2011-2015 (under review/consultation)
- Homelessness Strategy 2013-16 (under review/consultation)
- Joint Commissioning Strategy : Services for Young People in Brighton & Hove 2011-14
- Brighton & Hove Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions 2012-2015
- Early Help Pathway

1.1 Stronger Families, Stronger Communities

This strategy will develop existing links with the work of the Integrated Team for Families to ensure there is an early intervention approach, between the work of Children's Services and Housing including how support is provided to families to prevent homelessness.

2. **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Housing Committee approve this strategy.

3. **SUMMARY OF CURRENT HOUSING AND SUPPORT PROVISION WITHIN HOUSING**

Currently young peoples' Housing Services are funded by the 'Supporting People' Welfare budget and the Homelessness Prevention budget. The accommodation based support and floating support are currently part of the Integrated Support Pathway (ISP). The services consist of

- Sussex Central YMCA, Young Peoples Housing Advice Service, which is in Band 1 and aims to prevent young people from becoming homeless, and provide general Housing advice and signposting
- Higher support supported accommodation with 24 hour support
- Supported accommodation with office hour support only for young people with lower support needs
- A floating support service
- Sussex Nightstop which provides short term accommodation for young people within family homes.

All commissioned services are subject to contract management, quality standards and value for money benchmarking. In 2012/13, out of 232 moves from young peoples service ,171 moved to greater independence (74% of all moves).

4. **OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS PROPOSED IN THE HOUSING AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-25 JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

4.1 **Outcome 1- Increase the numbers of young people who are prevented from homelessness**

Although there has historically been good practice in this area, in Brighton and Hove, this strategy recognises that could be doing more to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

It has been recognised nationally that 'The experience of homelessness at a young age is not only stigmatising, but can, without effective support and

accommodation options; result in long-term poor outcomes.’ (V5 Developing a positive accommodation and support pathway for young people document 2013)

They key changes suggested in the strategy are

- Establish a joint assessment system that ensures the families of 16 and 17 year olds receive a joint visit by a social worker and a representative from Housing
- Provide Family Mediation/Whole Family Support including Family Coaching and Family Group Conferencing
- Review the universal prevention work through schools and youth provision to ensure young people are provided with the right information and messages about leaving home
- ‘Promote a ‘Twin track ‘approach with targeted work to identify those at high risk of homelessness before they reach the age of 16/17.
- Work with family support and prevention programmes to ensure joint working and communication
- Contribute to the BHCC review of ‘early help’

4.2 Outcome 2 -Young People have a more positive transition to adulthood through the provision of a Young Peoples’ Accommodation and Support Pathway

- Create a Young peoples’ Housing Pathway which includes all services which will provide information and advice across all stages of the pathway, not only about housing, but on other aspects of young people’s lives as they make the transition to adulthood
- Review assessment allocation functions to ensure joint working and accountable decision making around the services that young people receive
- As part of this pathway, ensure that there is an effective access service for young people which can provide Housing Advice and casework support and can work with young people to prevent homelessness where possible.

4.3 Outcome 3 -Better use of resources through Joint Commissioning approach to accommodation and support for young people

- Housing, Adult Social Care (transitions) and Children’s services to agree set of outcomes which will be included in all service specifications for services
- Agree a joint budget for the new Young Peoples’ Pathway and have a commissioning plan based on the needs identified and the resources available
- Design the future shape of services for the young peoples’ pathway in conjunction with residents, and partners to maximise the potential of the young peoples’ pathway to meet the needs of young people and young families and provide value for money

4.3.1 Joint Commissioning Plan proposals: pooled Children's Services and Housing Commissioning budgets

The Young Peoples' Pathway will involve changes to pool existing Children's Services and Housing Commissioning budgets. These changes are proposed based on the gaps identified from needs assessment and the consultation and the resources available.

This is a positive approach based on national good practice which recommends pooling resources to maximise the benefits for young people, and create efficiencies.

This strategy will be working towards implementing:

- commissioning a small high support service for high need young people
- commissioning a Supported Lodgings service (possibly with 'respite' beds where the young person stays for a limited period to enable family mediation)
- remodeling the floating support service to ensure adequate support is provided to young people in temporary accommodation and young families. Also provide some units of long term support for young people who would benefit from one professional rather than different support workers.
- commissioning some accommodation which could be used as an alternative to current temporary accommodation used.
- remodeling /decommissioning some models of support accommodation, and provide low cost accommodation for young people with low support needs (specifically 18-25 year olds)
- potential to jointly commission Young people Advice services in the city from 2015. This would include the existing Housing Advice Services and other advice service commissioned under Children's services.

5. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

The Needs Assessment which provided the evidence base for this project was completed in October 2012. The Needs Assessment specifically looked at

- Referral and assessment pathways and services provided to meet the council's statutory responsibilities
- Housing and Support provision for young people aged 16-25 (including young people who are looked after by the local authority, who are care

leavers, who are unaccompanied asylum seekers or who are teenage parents)

- Prevention of homelessness among young people

The strategy has been developed jointly with Children's Services Commissioners and service managers, and in consultation with stakeholders. There have been development workshops with internal staff in February and August 2012. The city's Youth Homeless Working Group which is the strategic working group to address Youth Homelessness, has been closely consulted. This group includes all current providers.

In April 2013, a project group was set consisting of Children's services and Housing staff to manage the delivery plan. This included setting up a pilot scheme around Joint assessments, (expected to start in October 2013) and a joint approach to the allocation of services.

The draft strategy was issued for consultation in June 2013.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

There have been three main consultation phases with this project

- During the development of the needs assessment. Voluntary Organisations and staff and service users were asked to feedback on the content. Services users were specifically surveyed on their views.
- During the Strategy Consultation phase (June /July 2013) A consultation portal was set up which received 36 responses. Some visits were made to services to talk to young people.
- In developing the Equalities Impact Assessment- Voluntary agencies and staff contributed to developing this, and were consulted on the draft.

The city's Youth Homeless Working Group which is the strategic working group to address Youth Homelessness has been closely consulted. This group includes all current providers.

8. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

This is a joint strategy between Housing and Children's which will be funded through the Housing Related Support budgets (£1.023million), Homelessness Prevention budgets (£0.266million) t and the 16 Plus Service Accommodation budget (£0.592million, subject to approval of the budget at Council in February 2014.

A report will be presented to the Children & Young People Committee on 14th October 2013.

A significant change will be the commitment of funds to the project from Children's services which will allow some Commissioning through Housing, which will aim to reduce costs and provide value for money.

The strategy will be managed by the Commissioning team within Housing which currently has a gross budget of £0.205million and is expected to be delivered within existing resources.

Finance Contact Consulted Neil Smith

Date 13/09/13

Legal Implications:

Members are advised that that the objectives set out in this report fall within the council's statutory and policy obligations. The council has a range of statutory obligations in respect of housing young people by virtue of statute and regulation, both in relation to housing law and in relation to the law relating to duties to children. Case law and statutory guidance in this area recognises that integrated services can assist in the delivery of a seamless, child-centred response to the needs of young people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness

The interface between housing law and the duties owed arising under the Children Acts are legally complex and require different departments to work together. For the young person a duty to ensure they have suitable accommodation is absolute and owed to them by the local authority as a whole, irrespective of which service ultimately takes responsibility for securing that accommodation. In this respect a joint strategy is likely to enhance the prospect of the local authority ensuring the joined up approach which is required in order to meet those legal duties, irrespective of which type of legislation ultimately applies in individual cases.

The joint strategy fulfils the expectations of the 2010 Statutory Guidance entitled 'Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' which advises local authority housing and children's services departments to work together to secure a range of suitable housing and support services for young people and their families, and recommends that Housing Homelessness Strategies and Supporting People or Housing Related Support Strategies should be drawn up to deal with the accommodation and support needs of vulnerable young people. The Guidance was issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families under section 7 of the Local authorities Social services Act 1970 and section 82 Housing Act 1996, and so should be followed,

Under Part III of the Children Act the local authority children's services and their partners have a duty to identify and support families where children and young people may be at risk of negative outcomes, including homelessness in the future, by delivering integrated and targeted services in their area. The

council is also required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to undertake a review of homelessness in its areas and to formulate an effective policy to deal with it in consultation with the social services. In addition one of the key objectives of the council's Single Homelessness Strategy is to work with services for single homeless people to prevent homelessness, through early identification and intervention.

The council must be able to fulfil its obligations under the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 to provide advice and assistance to homeless persons in its area, and specifically to accommodate homeless 16 to 17 years old who are in need, ex-care leavers under 18, and vulnerable care leavers of any age pursuant to the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.

The services provided to young people seeking help because of homelessness, or risk of homelessness, should have due regard to the expectations of the statutory guidance referred to above. These include that where the initial approach or referral for housing assistance is made to housing services, the authority should treat the approach/referral as an application for assistance under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. The authority is required to consider whether there is reason to believe the young person may be homeless or likely to become homeless within 28 days (section 184 of the 1996 Act) and, if so, the authority will need to make inquiries to determine whether any duty is owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. If there is reason to believe the young person may be eligible for assistance, may be homeless and may be 16 or 17 years of age, the authority will have an immediate duty to secure interim accommodation (section 188(1) of the 1996 Act) pending a decision whether any substantive duty is owed under Part 7. Such accommodation must be suitable for a 16 & 17 year old and, in considering suitability, authorities should bear in mind that 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless and estranged from their family will be particularly vulnerable and in need of support. The Secretary of State considers that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is unsuitable for 16 and 17 year olds.

Statutory Guidance provides that if the young person may be homeless or may be likely to become homeless within 28 days, housing services should make an immediate referral to children's services for an assessment of their needs under S 17 Children Act. This applies to all 16 and 17 year old applicants without exception. Children's services must undertake and complete an initial assessment as soon as possible, and within the expectations of the statutory guidance known as Working Together. Under the statutory guidance referred to above housing services should continue to secure accommodation under section 188 (1) until they have notified the young person whether any substantive duty is owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act.

The question of whether any substantive duty is owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act will depend in part on the outcome of the assessment by children's services, and whether any duty is owed under section 20 of the 1989 Children Act. Where children's services have accepted that they have a duty under

section 20 duty to provide accommodation, and the 16 or 17 year old has accepted the accommodation, the young person will not be homeless in law and no further duty will be owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. The duties to the young person will arise under the Children Act 1989.

Section 17(6) Children Act 1989 specifies that services provided under that section to young people can include the provision of accommodation. However, if a child is provided with accommodation under section 20 Children Act 1989, that child then becomes a 'looked after' child. It is a specific duty that a local authority **MUST** provide accommodation to a child if the criteria in section 20(1) Children Act 1989 are met. These are that the child must be 'a child in need' within the local authority's area who requires accommodation as a result of:

- there being no person who has parental responsibility for him; or
- his being lost or abandoned; or
- the person caring for him being prevented from providing him with suitable accommodation (for any reason including the parent being unable to function as a parent).

The extent to which a young person should be accommodated under S20 or otherwise will turn on the individual circumstances of the case. If a child is 'looked after' under S20, the local authority then owes additional general duties to the child under section 22 Children Act and also becomes liable to provide leaving care support under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

There may be procurement implications with respect to the proposal relating to the commissioning of accommodation as an alternative to the current temporary accommodation provision and these will need to be dealt with in accordance with the procurement rules when the need arises.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson and Amma Boetang
September 2013

Date 12th

Equalities Implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be finalised in September 2013.

Sustainability Implications:

There are no sustainability implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

This strategy aims to improve the response to young people in need of help with housing, but also the creation of a pathway aims to address other needs the young person may have, and ensure joined up response for young people. This may mean improvements in areas such as anti social behaviour if families are supported to manage these issues.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

This strategy will improve the response to young people and young families who are in need of Housing and Support. There is a risk that young people will not achieve positive outcomes, if the service provision is not available to meet their needs. Not addressing the needs of young people, risks increasing demands on adult services in the future.

Public Health Implications:

There are no public health implications

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The strategy highlights the links with the BHCC Corporate Plan 2013/14

• **Priority- Tackling inequality**

Specific outcomes in plan in 'Tackling inequality' relevant to the project

- Children and Young People have the best start in life
- Vulnerable adults supported to live healthy independent lives

Specific commitments relevant to the project

- Work with partners to create new services for people with multiple, complex needs including homelessness, mental health or substance misuse, subject to funding from a Big Lottery Fund bid.
- Review commissioning arrangements for supported housing provision between housing and public health to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people

- **Priority -Creating a more sustainable city-** promoting enterprise and learning, living within environmental limits and enhancing the environment, provision of sustainable transport
- **Priority -Engaging People** - improve engagement with people who live and work in the city.
- **Priority - Modernising the Council-** good governance and leadership, high performance workforce, excellent customer service, value for money

Specific outcome for 'Modernising the council': Value for Money

Specific commitments relevant to this project

- Deliver the council's value for money programme to make savings of £10.815 million this year from a total budget of approximately £400m

9. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

There are no alternative options.

10. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the new joint commissioning strategy to improve the city's response to young people, and young families between the ages of 16-25 who are in need of housing and support.

Relevant documents

- 1) Housing and Support for Young People aged 16-25 Joint Commissioning Strategy Children's Services and Housing Sept 2013**

