

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS)</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> March 2014</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Children's Services</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Philip Ward</b>	<b>Tel: 29-4270</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report proposes the commissioning of Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services (YIACS), under the delegated authority of the Director of Children's Services, as a single point of access for young people across the city in order to improve outcomes for young people.
- 1.2. There is national and local evidence that confirms the impact and value of YIACS but there has never been a joined up commissioning response to this provision in Brighton & Hove. With current funding arrangements, including key contracts, due for review before April 2015, there is an opportunity to commission an integrated, single point of entry YIACS service. The proposal is to test the longer term sustainability of a one-stop-shop YIACS model in a city central location, drawing upon the needs assessment outlined in the commissioned report 'Review of Youth Advice Services in Brighton & Hove' (January 2013).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee approves the procurement of a new and integrated Youth Information Advice and Counselling Service (YIACS), as set out in section 3.
- 2.2 That the committee grants delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to award the contract following the recommendations of the evaluation panel and the results of the tendering process.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In January 2013 a Review of Youth Advice Services in Brighton and Hove was commissioned by Children's Services in response to concerns about the long-term sustainability of the city's existing, well-regarded youth information, advice and counselling (YIACS) provision. The paper provided local and national evidence for the efficacy of an integrated YIACS model and the importance of ensuring access for young people to holistic, young person-friendly drop-in services that can offer early help, intervention and prevention responses to a wide range of inter-related needs.

- 3.2 In response to the report, a task and finish group was created to investigate the sustainability of Young People's YIACS. The resulting vision for YIACS in the city consists of a city-centre 'hub' where young people aged 13-25 years can access information, advice, and support on a diverse range of issues that include:
- social welfare issues, e.g. benefits, housing, debt, employment and training
  - practical issues, e.g. careers, money management, independent living skills
  - wider personal and health issues, e.g. relationship and family problems, sexual health, drugs and alcohol, healthy eating, smoking
  - mental and emotional health issues, e.g. stress, depression, low self-esteem, self-harm
  - provision of community counselling services as well as satellite provision through outreach sessions at appropriate venues across the city.
- 3.3 Currently the main YIACS providers, Impact Initiatives and Sussex Central YMCA, are commissioned to provide the following services for young people aged from 14 to 25
- Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services:
    - Youth Advice Centre (YAC), Blatchington Road, delivered by Sussex Central YMCA, offering general information and advice (IAG), early identification and brief intervention work for sexual health and substance misuse, full clinical contraception and sexual health services and counselling.
    - Young People's Centre (YPC), Ship Street, delivered by Impact Initiatives, offering counselling services
  - Housing Advice Services from Ovest House, West Street, delivered by Sussex Central YMCA, and early identification and brief intervention work for sexual health and substance misuse.
- 3.4 In addition, the Youth Employability Service (YES) offers employment, education and training (EET) IAG from the YAC site in Blatchington Road. This is a core council service and is not part of the YIACS funding arrangements. The council Youth Service also provides targeted information, advice and guidance via its mobile Youth Bus at various locations across the city.
- 3.5 This vision of a city-centre 'hub' does not necessarily imply a single building with services located under one roof. The important element is the provision of a single, coherent 'pathway' via an initial single point of access. The task and finish group's vision under current circumstances, which tests the ability to deliver from separate sites, is as follows:
- the Youth Information and Advice element, including housing advice, to be delivered from Ovest House
  - Counselling services delivered from the Young People's Centre (YPC) in Ship Street and from the YAC until March 2015.
- 3.6 Ovest House and the drop-in at YPC are 5 minutes apart and would be the main entry points / 'front doors' with signposting or referral to counselling services at YPC or YAC as appropriate. This would also include the pilot 'on-line' counselling programme which is being trialled at the moment.

- 3.7 The Clinical provision for sexual health is also within walking distance at CASH, Morley Street and GUM, at Sussex County Hospital. The additional investment within the YIACS model will therefore be related to early identification and brief interventions attached to the prevention of risk taking behaviour.
- 3.8 This YIACS model is entirely consistent with the Single Youth Referral Pathway which has been developed as part of the emerging Early Help Strategy. It is also an integral part of the Young People's 16-25 Accommodation Pathway which forms part of the Housing and Support Joint Commissioning Strategy. It will also fit well with the proposed development of an Early Help Hub and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), although details around this are still to be worked out.

#### **4. BUDGET AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 Together the council (Children's Services, Public Health and Housing) and the Clinical Commissioning Group currently invest approximately £300,000 to commission the advice, information and counselling services included in this proposal. This level of funding is available to commission YIACS provision from April 2015.
- 4.2 In addition, YMCA and Impact Initiatives generate income from a number of different resources such as external grants, different local authority departments, rental of space and Council Grants to fund other elements of information and advice. The YES contribution for EET IAG is council funded as part of the core Stronger Families, Youth and Communities budget.
- 4.3 The longer term sustainability of the current structure is now in question because:
- The Housing department has agreed to roll over the YMCA housing advice contract until March 2015 but will retender the service for April 2015
  - The funding for counselling services delivered by YMCA and Impact Initiatives is currently renewed on an annual rolling contract basis. In future, any provision of this funding will have to follow procurement rules and standards and this could result in a new provider of these services.
  - The budget for sexual health services is being rolled forward until March 2015 and will ensure that CASH services are available
  - Provider organisations are having to reshape their service delivery to respond to pressures such as rent, leases etc in a tight economic situation and this creates the need for a more system wide response to support continuation of service delivery.
  - Sussex Central YMCA moved their Information and Advice provision, including sexual health advice, from YAC to Ovest House in December 2013. From January 2014 they have been delivering these services from a new integrated advice hub at Ovest House. YAC Counselling will continue to operate out of Blatchington Road until March 2015 but all IAG drop-in facilities will cease after March 2014.
  - This will have a knock-on effect for YES who will also move from YAC by April 2014, with a view to delivering IAG support from the Ovest House premises.

## **5. JOINT COMMISSIONING PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the available funding should be 'joined together' in a joint commissioning approach. This would require a 'prospectus-style' specification set out in 'lots' within the prospectus, so that each different element of the service, required by the different funders, is delivered.
- 5.2 The specification will be outcome-based and include the different elements / lots required by each of the funding organisations. It will be made clear that bidders can bid for individual 'lots', different combinations of 'lots' or for the whole of the YIACS contract.
- 5.3 The timescale for this proposal is tight. Initial advice from Procurement is that the specification should be written and issued by July 2014 in order to follow due process to procure new service provision to start on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.

## **6. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 There is a debate as to whether the counselling budget should be included within a tendering process because of the timescales required by housing advice contractual arrangements.
- 6.2 Even if the counselling budget is put out to tender, there has been recent discussion as to whether it is best combined within the YIACS model or whether there should be further thought about creating a health-based 'wellbeing' centre for young people within the context of the whole pathway and drawing in other partners.
- 6.3 However, the 'prospectus model' is not intended to be inflexible – as we are taking things forward we can respond to contingencies / new developments and opportunities e.g. confirmation of new commissioning/funding.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Engagement and consultation with young people and other stakeholders will be carried out prior to the publication of the proposed prospectus. Sussex Central YMCA carried out a similar engagement and consultation exercise with their YIACS clients before moving their main provision from YAC to Ovest House.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposal is that a joint commissioning / prospectus approach, under the delegated authority of the Director of Children's Services, be agreed in order to establish a local Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Service (YIACS) as part of the Early Help Strategy and Hub. The conclusions from the strategic review outlined in 3.1 above together with the local operational issues, opportunities and challenges described in section 4.3 provide a rationale for this approach, to be implemented from April 2015.

## **9. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications:

The funding of the current service is via a number of different sources. It is not envisaged that the new arrangements will require any additional resources or generate any budget savings. All service redesigns need to be carefully costed and monitored to ensure value for money principals are maintained.

*Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis*

*Date: 06/02/14*

Legal Implications:

This report sets out the proposed future service model for the provision of advice, information and counselling services for young people. This model should ensure that the Council continues to be in a position to provide services to vulnerable children in need in accordance with S17 Children Act 1989.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Name Hilary Priestley*

*Date: 26/02/14*

Equalities Implications:

- 9.1 An appropriate Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken prior to the procurement process.

Sustainability Implications:

- 9.2 There are no sustainability implications.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 9.3 Not applicable.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 9.4 This proposal is consistent with the council's approach to tackling crime and disorder.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 9.5 The risks have been fully assessed in the work of the Task and Finish group as described in 3.2.

Public Health Implications:

- 9.6 Public Health is integral to this proposal and provides some of the funding for sexual health advice.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

This proposal is consistent with the priorities in the Corporate Plan in particular Tackling Inequality and Modernising the Council.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. None