

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 90

Brighton & Hove City Council

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| Subject: | Relocation of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Service from Ship Street | | |
| Date of Meeting: | 2 March 2009 | | |
| Report of: | Director of Children's Services Director of Finance & Resources | | |
| Contact Officer: | Name: | Geoff Williams, CYPT | Tel: 296167 |
| | | Jessica Hamilton, Property & Design | 291461 |
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| Key Decision: | Yes | Forward Plan No.CYP7171 | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Youth Offending Team (YOT) currently operate from 22 Ship Street on which the council has a lease until September 2009. In recent years the caseworkers have been unable to see clients on site due to restrictions in the lease and have had to split their service between Ship Street and Ovest House, West Street (another leased in building), resulting in a less efficient and effective service. Ship Street is also now too small for the YOT, which has expanded significantly since 1999. The proposal is not to renew the lease at Ship Street on expiry in September 2009 and take a new lease of alternative premises. This report is complimented by a report in part two of the Agenda.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet Member approves:

- 2.1 The proposal not to renew the lease the council holds on 22 Ship Street.
- 2.2 Taking a lease of suitable premises, yet to be identified, within the next 6 months, with terms to be negotiated on behalf of Children Services by Property & Design under general delegations.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet Member notes the 'fall back' position currently being negotiated should it not be possible to identify suitable premises prior to the expiry of the current lease, which is to renew the existing lease, but on a short term basis thus allowing more time to source alternative accommodation.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The YOT is a multi-agency team with approximately 42 staff (full and part-time) and 55 volunteers. The team comprises staff from across the CYPT including Education, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Young Persons Substance Misuse Service as well as the Police and Probation service. They work with young people from the age of 10 to 17 and occasionally to age 20. The main source of funding is from the Local Authority and the Youth Justice Board (YJB). They also have a prevention budget from the YJB, which is devolved to the Targeted Youth Support Service in order to facilitate early identification and intervention of 'at risk' young people by the community based multi agency teams, so that problems are dealt with before they become intractable.
- 3.2 The YOT work with young people for periods of 3 months to 3 years, though this can be extended, and have an extensive range of interventions including restorative justice, art projects (including the making of a feature length film 'The Front'), cognitive behavioural therapy, family work, group work, anger management, education programmes (including rapid English) and an Employment Project. In an average year they will work with approximately 400 young people and will have approximately 150 young people on their books at any one time.
- 3.3 The YOT took occupation of 22 Ship Street in September 1999 on a 10 year lease at £20,000 pa. The lease is excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and so has no automatic right to renewal. The rent was reviewed in September 2004. The permitted user clause within the lease is as offices and there are standard restrictions to prevent the council causing nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to occupiers of adjoining premises. In 2006 following complaints from the ground floor tenants of the building (Jeremy Hoyer and England at Home) that YOT's clients were causing a nuisance and/or disturbance, the landlord sought to resolve the dispute by asking the council to formally undertake not to see any clients at the building. Whilst the council did not sign the undertaking, in order to prevent the dispute escalating the YOT ceased seeing clients at the property.
- 3.4 Alterations were carried out to the second floor of Ovest House in West Street (another leased in property) to provide additional interview rooms as well as an Education, Training and Employment Room allowing YOT to hold client meetings, interviews and training there. Some of the YOT staff and administration moved to Ovest House to facilitate the service there whilst the majority of YOT staff remained in Ship Street. This dual location has had an adverse affect on the effectiveness of the YOT service because they have been unable to provide a multi-agency "one-stop" service to its clients resulting in inefficiencies.

- 3.5 In addition, the service has outgrown the accommodation at Ship Street. Since the YOT took the space in Ship Street the team has grown by approximately 10 members and their requirement for space for meeting and training client's has also increased. As the lease is due to end in September 2009 YOT have been investigating alternative accommodation for 3 years and have been unsuccessful in securing suitable premises. Most recently YOT identified a property at 49 Church Road, which met their requirements. However, the landlord's agent agreed terms with another party before YOT had an opportunity to obtain Cabinet Member approval to take a lease on the property.
- 3.6 YOT requires office space of at least 4,000 and up to 4,500 square feet depending on the configuration of the space, to include interview rooms and group rooms. The provision of car parking spaces would be ideal but not essential. The location needs to be central and easily accessible by public transport.
- 3.7 In terminating the lease at Ship Street the council will be likely to have a dilapidations liability. Action is being taken now to prepare a schedule of dilapidations with a view to either carrying out works before the expiry of the lease or to identify budget in the new financial year with which to settle a potential dilapidations claim. The property is generally in good order and it is anticipated that the claim will relate to general wear and tear. Officers will engage agents to complete negotiations to ensure a settlement is reached, which represents value for money within the context of the proposed move. If this is not achievable then the situation will be reviewed.
- 3.8 YOT intend to cover the extra costs by reviewing the staffing establishment and structure to identify savings and by vacating Ovest House. In addition savings will be made by terminating the current annual car park passes for the North Road car park. It is not expected that this will adversely affect delivery. It should also be noted that by regaining client access to YOT premises this will speed up and improve the service being offered, capitalising on the multi agency aspect of the service.
- 3.9 A Steering Group involving senior YOT and Property & Design staff is managing the relocation project and is examining a range of options and contingencies, including seeking an extension to the current lease on a short term basis.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation is taking place with the staff affected, partner agencies, local communities and importantly the young people themselves, with their views being fed into the planning process. The Youth Justice Strategy Group and the Youth Justice Board have been advised of proposals.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The report updates on the operational decision to relocate the Youth Offending Team from Ship Street and Ovest House to a new site (yet to be determined). The paper indicates that rent will initially increase which will met from savings as referred to in para 3.8. The paper also refers to a potential dilapidation liability at Ship Street, as well as the council responsibility for all repairs, insurance and

outgoings including business rates and rent reviews relating to the new site. It should be stressed that all additional costs will need to be met from the YOT Budget. It is therefore important that the position is reviewed regularly to ensure that there are no additional costs above the overall funding received.

Finance Officer Consulted: Paul Brinkhurst

Date: 16/01/2009

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 S. 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the council to enter into this lease. It is not considered that any individual's Human Rights Act rights will be adversely affected by the recommendations in this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Anna MacKenzie

Date: 19/01/2009

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 In identifying alternative premises DDA requirements will be taken into consideration to ensure access is suitable for staff and clients.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 It is intended the alternative accommodation will not only meet the YOT's current requirement but will also provide some flexibility to accommodate changes moving forward.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 This proposal supports the development of effective Youth Offending Services, which is a main element of the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The value of the dilapidations claim on 22 Ship Street is as yet unknown. However the property is in relatively good order and the YOT are taking action now to assess the potential claim so they can allow for it in their future budget.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 By moving location the YOT will be able to once again provide a "one-stop" multi-agency service which will not only bring about efficiencies within the service but will also facilitate the better recording of results.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 A steering group has been established which has and is continuing to explore a range of options aimed at ensuring more effective services are delivered by the YOT at the best possible cost. Negotiations are also taking place with the freeholder of the current premises at 22 Ship Street with a view to developing a 'fall back' option, which is to extend the existing lease on a short term basis. Even if this were possible, it is not however the favoured option, as it would involve continuing the current inefficient arrangement of providing a split service from two sites. It is also the case that the current premises are too small in the long term to accommodate the YOT.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 In order to avoid a dispute with the landlord of 22 Ship Street the YOT has ceased client meetings on site and is providing a split site service from Ship Street and Ovest House. Because the building can no longer meet their service requirements and is becoming too small the YOT wish to move to alternative premises when their current lease expires in September 2009.
- 7.2 At least one building which was deemed suitable is now no longer available because it was not possible to obtain the necessary approvals in time to secure the lease. A steering group has now been established which is exploring a range of potential premises. By obtaining Cabinet Member approval in principle in advance of any negotiations the YOT will be in a stronger position to negotiate a new lease for suitable premises successfully.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

