

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 September 2023

TITLE	Young People’s Housing & Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan 2024		
Ward(s)	Citywide		
Author: Paul Sylvester	Job title: Head of Housing Options		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes	Executive Director lead: John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: To agree the Young People’s Housing and Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan and to seek delegated authority to the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration in consultation with Executive Director for Children & Education to procure the services as set out in the plan.			
Evidence Base: A Young Person’s Housing & Independence Pathway Plan was agreed by Cabinet in January 2017 and the contracts for the services set out in that plan are now reaching their endpoint on 31st March 2024, although extensions are potentially available for some until 30 th September 2024. Since 2017 there have been changes including the introduction of the Homelessness Prevention Act, the development of a new Joint Protocol between Housing and Children’s Services for the joint assessment of homeless 16–17-year-olds, and the introduction of Ofsted registration, standards, and inspections (from 2024). We have carried out a needs and gap analysis looking at the demand, provision and have carried out extensive consultation and engagement with young people on the proposals arising. The key issues arising from the needs analysis are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased presentations to our Youth Hub • Increase in incidence and severity of mental ill health • Increasing numbers of care leavers • Increasing numbers of young unaccompanied asylum seekers • Lack of affordable move on opportunities for young people The issues raised and discussions held with young people in the engagement workshops have had a direct impact on the development of the strategy. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal for additional mental health support in the form of a ‘navigator’ role who would work with young people for a specified time and to work also with their key support worker to share knowledge and skills. • The change in how we will commission support to enable providers to deliver it more flexibly. • The focus on improving our information about homelessness and housing options on our website and being more creative in using available media. 			

- The proposal for ongoing engagement with young people and to design the procurement process(es) so that young people can be involved.
- The proposal for supported immediate access and short-term temporary accommodation specifically for young people.
- The repurposing of some services to be for Care Leavers or young people in care only.

The refreshed Young People's housing & Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan 2024 seeks to address these issues within the current budget envelope, with yearly uplift in contract value in line with procurement advice.

The main proposals to service provision are:

- Peer education work alongside improving information for young people and their families about homelessness and housing options available to them, co-designing some of this with young people themselves.
- Recommission a youth homelessness prevention hub. The current contract will be extended for a further six months (until September 2024) to enable a government funded consultant to advise on remodelling to maximise the effectiveness of this service and to enable implementation of the new Joint Protocol.
- Redesign the accommodation into a Supported Housing Pathway to try to maximise the existing level of provision and changing the way we commission the support to allow individual support packages to be more flexible and to reflect the required Ofsted registration.
- Commission a new Mental Health Navigator role to work across the Pathway services – dependant on identifying additional funding source/s
- Improve access to interpreting resources to address specific needs of arising newly arriving unaccompanied young asylum seekers
- Redesignate in house services for Children in Care and specialist care leaver accommodation options
- A greater focus on supporting move-on and developing packages of support for accessing the private rented sector

There is also the intention to build on the learning from the engagement with young people, to continue with engagement through the life of the plan to inform development and co-design – including designing the procurement process(es) so that young people can be involved.

Current budget envelope per annum is £1,774k and net £1,731k (after £43K Childrens Services contribution to Youth Hub).

Proposed maximum budget envelope: for recommissioned services: (including delayed tendering & potential recommissioning of Youth Hub): £1,843k and net £1,736k after £107k Childrens Services contribution. This assumes a minimum of £60k recharge for covering support (see below).

This is based on an increase of 8% for Core and Dispersed supported housing services and the Youth Hub. Funds have been reallocated from Branch Out to offset this 8% increase and to cover for early prevention information.

An increased contribution is proposed from Childrens service with two elements:

- Children Services and Housing Options have joint assessment responsibilities for young people aged 16-17, and these young people make up 27% of the Youth Hub presentations, CS to contribute £ 47K (13.5% of the total revised Youth Hub budget).
- Recharge of approx. a minimum of £60k to £92.7K to cover support costs for those young people aged 16-17 placed in the Pathway under Section 20 (estimated on basis of current numbers and 8% uplift)

Current Youth Hub service to be extended for six months – until September 2024. A separate Cabinet report outlining tendering proposals for this service will be brought to Feb/March 2024 Cabinet.

Other recommissioned contracts to start from April 2024 with contract lengths, as advised by procurement, of three years with the option to extend for a further two years. Total maximum budget if the five years are utilised (and Youth Hub recommissioned in September 2024 to align with other contract end dates) will be £9.213M subject to any

annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet :

1. Approve the Young People's Housing and Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan 2024 at Appendix A.
2. Authorises the Executive Director Growth & Regeneration, in consultation with Executive Director for Children & Education and Cabinet Member for Housing, Delivery & Homes to take all steps required to procure and award the contracts necessary for the implementation of the Young People's Housing & Independence Commissioning Plan, for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum total budget envelope of £9.2213M (subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index) as outlined in this report
3. Authorises the Executive Director Growth & Regeneration, in consultation with Executive Director for Children & Education and Cabinet Member for Housing, Delivery & Homes to invoke any subsequent extensions or variations specifically defined in the contracts being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope (subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index) outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

Theme 1: of the Corporate Strategy 2022-27 is Children and Young People with the top-level aim of achieving "a city where every child belongs and every child gets the best start in life, whatever circumstances they were born in to".

CYP1. Child friendly city

CYP2. Supported to thrive

CYP4. Intergenerational equality

Theme 5: of the Corporate Strategy 2022-27 is Homes and Communities with the top-level aim of achieving "Healthy, resilient, and inclusive neighbourhoods with fair access to decent, affordable homes."

HC3. Homelessness

City Benefits:

This proposal, if approved, will benefit the city as it will prevent many young people from becoming homeless and will provide supported housing options for those who are homeless. This means that the young people will be safe and have opportunities to develop independence skills to help build successful futures. It is also expected that this will help reduce spend on emergency accommodation, though it is not yet possible to accurately calculate the impact of this.

In addition, we will assess providers through the procurement processes in relation to social value, environmental awareness, and sustainability that they will bring to the contracts. We have effective contract management processes set up within the team with regular reporting on equalities data of service users and staff. This allows us to challenge refusals and evictions that relate to a protected characteristic e.g., gender or disability, (such as learning difficulty or mental health).

If the approach outlined in this report is not approved, then the current supported housing providers will, at the end of their contracts, cease providing support to the young people and may seek to end the licences and tenancies through which the young people are housed. This will cause anxiety and distress to the young people and will cost the council more money than we are currently paying. The Youth Hub will cease to operate and young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will have to present at the Citizen Service Point alongside homeless adults, and to Children's Services. This will put additional pressure on these services.

Consultation Details:

Details of the engagement and consultation are in Appendix B.
 We started this process by gathering feedback from young people, our providers, colleagues.
 Young people in the Pathway were asked to complete a short online survey about the support, the accommodation, the information, understanding of their options, any comments they wanted to make.
 Providers were asked to complete a survey about what worked well, what didn't and what they would like to see changed or improved for young people.
 Users of MAPS were contacted by phone and asked to respond to questions about if they had been seen promptly, if they had felt listened to, if they had been treated with respect.
 A group of staff from Housing and Children's Services were brought together to meet monthly (from November) to feedback on the services and the developing proposals.

Once the proposals were in skeleton form, we organised engagement workshops with young people (including care leavers) who are housed in the Pathway, or have been housed in the Pathway, or who are due to leave care. 5 workshops, face to face, each 2 hours long. 14 young people have attended. We have shared information about our outline proposals and have developed these (e.g., the Mental Health Support Navigator) directly as a result of the engagement workshops. We had already thought that more flexible support would be beneficial and young people have clearly told us that they really like and value the support and need it to be flexible. Young people have also told us that they want to continue with engagement sessions about homelessness and we are building this into our process.

We held two consultation sessions in late May (via Teams) and an in-person event in early June. These were promoted these via our web page and by directly emailing stakeholder organisations working with young people in the city. 19 people attended. We also circulated a questionnaire about the recommissioning proposals and have collated the six responses received.

Background Documents:

- St Basil's [The Positive Pathway framework](#)
- [Young People's Housing & Independence Pathway Plan 2017](#)
- Ofsted [Supported Accommodation Regulations](#)
- [Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024](#)

Revenue Cost	£ £1.842.64M pa– £9.213M over 5 years, uplift still to be agreed)	Source of Revenue Funding	£1.736M Housing Options pa Childrens Services £107K pa
Capital Cost	£	Source of Capital Funding	e.g. grant/ prudential borrowing etc.
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This proposal seeks to procure and award a contract for the implementation of the Young People's Housing & Independence Commissioning Plan from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2027 with an option to extend for a further two years.
 The gross annual cost is £1,843k. After taking account of £107k Childrens Services contribution the net cost of £1,736k from 1st April 2024 will be covered by the current budget envelope for the equivalent services within the Housing Commissioned Services. The new annual contract value includes a 8% uplift and this is covered by a small £4k increase from Childrens Services contribution a minimum of £60k recharge to Childrens Services for S20 young people aged 16-17 placed in Pathway accommodation.
 The procurement over the period of the contract of up to five years assumes the need to include an annual uplift from the second year, 1st April 2025, on the basis of a combination of CPI and an appropriate housing index. The CPI is expected to be less volatile when the uplift comes into effect than it has been over the last couple of years. This

uplift provision is considered a necessary requirement for a successful procurement outcome.
Finance Business Partner: Martin Johnson – Interim Finance Manager (Housing) 16/08/23.
2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements. The consultation responses must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the decision. The leading cases on consultation provide that consultation should; occur when proposals are at a formative stage; should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and should allow adequate time for consideration and response. There must be clear evidence that the decision maker has considered the consultation responses, or a summary of them, before taking its decision.
Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 21 August 2023
3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.
IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect
4. HR Advice: There are no HR implications evident.
HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner 26 June 2023

EDM Sign-off	John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration Abi Gbago, Executive Director: Children and Education	19 July 2023 26 July 2023
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes Cllr Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Equalities	1 August 2023
For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off	Mayor’s Office	7 August 2023

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	No
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO

Appendix L – Procurement	YES