

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 06 February 2024

TITLE	The future of the Homelessness Prevention Youth Hub Service		
Ward(s)	Citywide		
Author: Paul Sylvester	Job title: Head of Housing Options		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness	Executive Director lead: John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth & Regeneration		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: To seek approval for the recommissioning of a multi-agency Youth Hub and to seek delegated authority to the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration in consultation with Executive Director for Children and Education to agree the details for the tender documents for this service.			
Evidence Base:			
<p>1. <u>Young Person’s Housing & Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan</u> A refreshed Young Person’s Housing & Independence Pathway (HPHIP) Commissioning Plan was agreed by Cabinet in September 2023 – including a total baseline budget for the new services that remained within the current budget envelope.</p> <p>While most of the services were approved for recommissioning from April 2024, the Youth Hub service was extended for six months (until September 2024) to enable a government funded consultant to advise on remodelling the service to maximise its effectiveness and to enable implementation of the new Joint Protocol. With a separate Cabinet report outlining tendering proposals for this service to be brought to Feb/March 2024 Cabinet.</p>			
<p>2. <u>Outcomes for Young People facing Homelessness</u></p> <p>The Youth Hub provides a positive, dedicated space for young people threatened with homelessness to get comprehensive early advice. Over a quarter of all young people (16 – 22 year olds) presenting at the Hub are helped to return or stay in their current home or with their wider family network where safe to do so. For 16 /17 year olds facing a housing crisis - the Hub provides access to social workers, housing advisors and support staff, all within the same space.</p>			
<p>3. <u>Initial finding from Consultancy Work:</u></p> <p>The consultant’s stage 1 report has recently been received following a 2-day deep dive into our services and linking into national best practice. This is the first stage of a larger commission to provide support to Bristol City Council over a few months on improvements to our youth housing pathways. The intention of the report is to provide an external view regarding the current arrangements and services provided through our current partnership arrangements to prevent</p>			

and relieve homelessness amongst 16 – 22-year-olds.

4. Key recommendations relating to the recommissioning of a Youth Hub include:

- Support for retaining the central youth hub model (good practice elsewhere also indicates this is the most successful model for bigger urban authorities)
- Retaining current commissioning approach – i.e. tendering out for an external provider as a commissioned partner, led by Housing Services but with joint oversight and responsibility with Children’s services.
- Defining more clearly the roles and functions of the third-party provider staff, housing advisers and social workers - and testing whether all parties understand and knows the role they play
- Closer alignment to the natural flow of the homelessness legislation and the relevant parts of the Children Act
- A requirement for evidence in tenders of added value for preventing youth homelessness in Bristol (over and above the usual elements assessed by Social Value Portal)

To improve the effectiveness of this service, the recommendations are:

A greater focus on early help response – including:

- The development of a consistent response for 16/17 year olds and their families in local communities where they already have an open or recently closed case with the local Children’s Social Care teams
- Further examination of the ‘early help’ response to homelessness prevention for older teenagers and consideration of whether this could be improved through a blended model with more specialist or structured homelessness prevention work in local areas, alongside the centrally based youth hub.
- More emphasis, and clarity, on prevention work by the third-party provider staff
- Revised performance indicators for the third-party provider based more logically on key outcomes relating to homelessness prevention and relief, linked to the homelessness legislation and relevant areas of children’s legislation.
- An increase in social work capacity, so there are 2 full time social workers linked to the youth hub as a minimum.
- Ongoing review of the 2.5 Housing Advisers caseloads and capacity. Caseloads may need to increase over time, although this is not definite.

5. Next Stage

There will now be an on-going process with commissioners and practitioners from both Directorates, and with the external consultant’s input, to develop a more detailed specification and tender documentation, and design in best value and measurable outcomes.

The timeline now for the procurement process is as follows:

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Tender launch: | March 2024 |
| • Tender close | late April 2024 |
| • Decision notification / standstill | June 2024 |
| • Contract award & sign off | late June/early July 2024 |
| • Implementation period | July/August /September 2024 |
| • Service start date | October 2024 |

Other HPHIP recommissioned contracts start from April 2024 with contract lengths, of three years with the option to extend for a further two years, as advised by procurement. The Youth Hub will be tendered out, with the new service in place in October 2024 with contract length of three years and the option to extend for a further 18 months to align with other HPHIP contract end dates.

The consultant's work raises a number of additional possible improvements and these will be reported back to the joint Housing Options and Childrens Service planning board at regular intervals.

We will also build on learning from our engagement with young people, during the YPHIP consultation phase, to ensure that the planning phase takes account of their feedback.

6. Budget Envelope

The costs for the remodelled service will still align with the figures agreed at Cabinet in September 2023, as part of the overall HPHIP Plan. This was based on an increase of 8% for Core and Dispersed supported housing services and the Youth Hub, with the increased costs covered by identifying alternative funding sources for some other elements of the Plan. This enables the total first year costs for the full YPHIP to remain within the current Housing Options budget.

First year Youth Hub budget envelope (October 24 – end September 25) is £348.84K

- This includes an increased contribution from Childrens service of £47K (13.5% of the total revised Youth Hub budget)

– calculated on the basis that:

- 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.

The total maximum five year envelope for YPHIP, as approved by September 2023 Cabinet was £9.213M - subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index.

The total maximum budget for the Youth Hub element (if the full four and half years are utilised to align with the overall HPHIP contract end dates) will be £1,569,780 subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That cabinet

1. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with Executive Director for Children and Education and Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Equalities to take all steps required to procure and award the contract for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 18 months, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum total budget envelope of £1.570 M (subject to any annual uplift agreed that will be based on CPI and an appropriate Housing index) as outlined in this report
2. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with Executive Director for Children and Education to invoke any subsequent extensions or variations specifically defined in the contract 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) as 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."

The Corporate Strategy includes additional and specific aims around Homelessness (HC3).

City Benefits:

1. This proposal, if approved, will benefit the city as it will prevent many young people from becoming homeless by providing timely information, advice and prevention work, and will refer on, where appropriate, to a range of supported housing options for those who are homeless. 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.
2. In addition, we will assess potential 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.

If the approach outlined in this report is not approved 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, or to Children’s Services. This will put additional pressure on these services and it is likely that young people will not get the level of assistance needed for some to return to family or recover from homelessness. Without more specialist services for young people, the risk of homelessness being the gateway into rough sleeping for the most vulnerable under 25 year olds will increase..

Consultation Details:

Users of MAPS were contacted by phone and asked to respond to various questions to explore whether 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 2023) to feedback on the services and the developing proposals.

Young people have also told us that they want to continue with engagement sessions about homelessness and we are building this into our process.

Background Documents:

- St Basil’s [The Positive Pathway framework](#)
- [Young People’s Housing & Independence Pathway Plan 2017](#)
- [Young People’s Housing & Independence Pathway Plan 2024](#)
- [Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024](#)
- [5 September 2023 Cabinet Paper ‘Young People’s Housing & Independence Pathway Commissioning Plan 2024’](#)

Revenue Cost	£1.57M over four and half years (uplift still to be agreed)	Source of Revenue Funding	£301.83K Housing Options pa Childrens Services £47K pa
Capital Cost	£n/a	Source of Capital Funding	
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:

The proposal seeks to procure and award a contract for the ongoing provision of the Homelessness Prevention Youth Hub Service. The proposal is for a three year contract with an 18 month option to extend, at a total cost of £1.570m.

Funding from Childrens Services has been identified of £0.212m over the life of the contract. The remaining £1.358m will be funded through existing budgetary provision. Whilst the report details the need for an uplift in budget for this particular service, it will need to be met from the wider, existing, homelessness budgets. In addition, all efforts will be made to identify and secure external grant funding to mitigate any increase.

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Finance Business Partner: Martin Johnson – Interim Finance Manager Housing and Landlord Services 18 January 2024

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.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 16 January 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect. 22 December 2023

4. HR Advice: There are no implications on BCC staffing in relation to this proposal

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner 17 January 2024

EDM Sign-off	John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	22 November 2023
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Equalities Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness	27 November 2023 11 December 2023
For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off	Mayor’s Office	8 January 2024

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
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	NO