

Report of: Strategy and Review Business Manager

To: Executive Board

Date: 20th February 2006

Item No:

Title of Report: Housing Vulnerable Young People – Recommendation Costs

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of Report: To inform the Executive Board of the costs involved in implementing the recommendations of the Housing Vulnerable Young People Scrutiny Review.

Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ed Turner

Scrutiny Responsibility: Housing

Ward(s) affected: All

Report approved by: Jeremy King, Legal Services, Dave Higgins, Finance and Asset Management.

Policy Framework: No

Recommendation(s): The Executive Board is recommended to consider the costs of implementing the Housing Vulnerable Young People Scrutiny Review recommendations before deciding whether they should be implemented.

1. Introduction

- At its meeting on 16th January, the Executive Board considered the Housing Vulnerable Young People Scrutiny Review recommendations. At that meeting the Board agreed the recommendations in principle, subject to costs being presented to the next meeting.

3. Report

4. The attached table outlines each of the recommendations, the officer responsible for their implementation, the action to be taken, the costs and the timetable for reporting back progress to the Housing Scrutiny Committee. This table has been prepared with input from officers from Housing Services and Neighbourhood Renewal.
5. The Executive Board is asked to consider this information and decide whether the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review should be taken forward and implemented.

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Background Papers:

Housing Vulnerable Young People Review Report

Housing Vulnerable Young People Scrutiny Review

Work Programme

Following the completion of the Housing Vulnerable Young People Scrutiny Review, members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee requested that a work programme be put together outlining how the review recommendations will be taken forward, assuming they are approved by the Executive Board on 16th January. This is set out below.

If the recommendations are approved, in line with current practice, a six-month follow up will take place to see how things have progressed.

Recommendation	Officer Responsible	Action	Cost	Timescale
<p>The City Council should investigate the possibility of establishing a foyer in Oxford to provide safe and affordable accommodation integrated with education, training and employment opportunities for vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Before the Council commits to this project work should be done to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the need for a foyer in Oxford. • Clarify which client group the foyer should support • Investigate possible sites • Work with a Housing Association partner to develop such a scheme, and not try to do this alone. • Open discussions with the Supporting People commissioning body to see if SP funding is likely to be forthcoming for 	<p>Graham Stratford/Lisa Watson</p>	<p>This is a long term, aspirational aim, that maybe many years in development. In order for a foyer to become a reality in Oxford a number of different criteria have to be met. The two key criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suitable building becomes available; • The funding gap for the decent homes standard is met; <p>The position regarding a suitable building may become clearer once the Review of Older People's Services has reported (on HSC agenda 25th January 2006). The decent homes standard has to met by 31st December 2010. The financial position in relation to this will become clearer in the coming months and years.</p> <p>Feasibility work would be carried out by officers from Housing Services and Neighbourhood Renewal and resources for this (for the time being) met from officer time. As the project moves on extra resources maybe</p>	<p>The costs of a feasibility study for the foyer are unknown, but at this stage it isn't proposed that a budget bid for this work be made to the Executive Board. The realisation of a foyer is dependent on a number of factors, such as the outcome of the Elderly Persons Service Review providing a suitable site for a foyer, or whether a purpose built site would be required.</p> <p>If the Council was to provide a building to house the foyer, rental income to the Council would be lost</p>	<p>Initial report on progress to HSC in 12 months. (Feb 2007), when more information will be known on the likelihood of a foyer scheme being delivered in Oxford.</p>

such a scheme.		needed and a budget bid could be made for this.	as well as income from the sale of the building and land if the site was no longer required. Using the model established by Paradigm in Hatfield, once the foyer is up and running there is no cost to the Council.	
The City Council should investigate the possibility of establishing a night stop scheme, as already established in other districts in Oxfordshire, to provide emergency accommodation for homeless young people.	Dennis Boobier	This work would be taken forward within current resources. Before a scheme is developed, a number of factors should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a significant need that should be met by the Council – there is emergency young people’s accommodation in the city (the Bridge); • Should Supporting People fund this kind of project rather than Oxford City Council? • The risks of such a scheme need to be considered. For example, placing somebody at short notice with a family even for one night could cause significant problems. <p>Consideration will also be given as to whether this could be developed with the Supported Lodging Scheme.</p>	Feasibility costs will be met from current officer time. Once feasibility is known, then costs of implementation can be considered.	Progress report to HSC in 6 months (August 2006)
The Housing Scrutiny Committee should monitor the work carried out by Mediation in Action to prevent homelessness amongst young people in Oxford. The review group would like the following information presented to the Housing Scrutiny	Andrew Davies/Dennis Boobier	Performance data on the work with Mediation in Action is being collected and will be presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee at agreed intervals.	Costs will be met from current resources.	Progress Report in 6 months (August 2006)

<p>Committee on a six monthly basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of family/friend exclusions that lead to homelessness presentations. • The number of referrals to Mediation in Action. • The number of homelessness acceptances as a result of family/friend exclusions. • The number of homelessness preventions as a result of mediation. 				
<p>The City Council investigate the feasibility of installing greater security measures in all Council owned temporary accommodation hostels/houses and/or employing wardens to increase safety and reduce damage to properties.</p>	<p>Graham Stratford/Dennis Boobier</p>	<p>Since the review was carried out, the number of Council owned hostels has been reduced from 12 to 2.</p> <p>Both the Council hostels contain self-contained units, CCTV systems and are visited daily by TAM's. Issues with CCTV have been identified and ways to improve security are being considered in the effort to continually improve services.</p> <p>The cost of employing staff to provide out-of-hours cover could be prohibitive and can't be met from current budgets. If the Executive Board approve the recommendation a budget bid may be necessary. If repair costs reduce as a result of spending on security, savings in this area could be made in future years.</p>	<p>Work on the feasibility of greater security, including improvements to CCTV and employing extra staff could be met from current resources.</p> <p>Costs of implementing such measures would need to be considered in the future, and could be prohibitive (Likely to be well above £50,000 p.a. for a minimum level of out of hours cover).</p>	<p>Initial report to HSC in Aug 2006.</p>
<p>Where possible private landlords who lease PSL properties to the City Council should be encouraged to improve their security arrangements.</p>	<p>Dennis Boobier</p>	<p>This work is ongoing. Efforts are made to ensure that PSL accommodation is safe and secure for residents.</p> <p>New initiatives/developments with PSL landlords will be reported to HSC as part of the review follow up process.</p>	<p>Costs can be met from current resources.</p>	<p>Initial report to HSC in August 2006.</p>

<p>Temporary Accommodation Managers should be allowed enough time to help people settle in to temporary accommodation. An extra member of staff may be needed to do this.</p>	<p>Dennis Boobier</p>	<p>The process of settling a resident in their accommodation is often left to the landlord of the property, without input from the TAM's due to their workload.</p> <p>Employing an extra member of staff would help to alleviate this problem, but currently there is no budget for this. The cost of employing another TAM would be £35,750 p.a.</p>	<p>The costs of employing another TAM would be £35,750 p.a. This is a budget bid for 2006/07 and is in addition to the £90,000 bid already made to fund the TAM's.</p>	<p>Update in August 2006.</p>
<p>The City Council should aim to improve its joint working in three areas – Options and Allocations, Temporary Accommodation Managers and other support workers and the City/County Council protocol.</p>	<p>Dennis Boobier/Andrew Davies</p>	<p>This is an area of work that is ongoing as part of the Council's aim to improve services.</p> <p>Since the review was completed, work has been done with the County Council to improve working with the Leaving Care Team and the Children and Families Team. Since November 2005, there has been a drop off in the number of homelessness presentation by 16 and 17 year olds to the Council, as a result of pro-active homelessness prevention by the County Council, in conjunction with officers from the Housing Options Team.</p> <p>The Housing Scrutiny Committee should receive regular updates on the three areas with which they are concerned, carrying out follow-up work if necessary.</p>	<p>The costs will be met from existing resources.</p>	<p>Update in August 2006</p>
<p>Care leavers aged 18 or over no longer in full time education should be moved into settled accommodation once they leave the care of Oxfordshire County Council.</p>	<p>Dennis Boobier/Housing Options Team/Andrew Davies</p>	<p>This recommendation will be progressed, but not necessarily by allocating care leavers Council accommodation. It is important that arrangements for move on from care are put in place months or years before a care leaver reaches 18.</p> <p>If care leavers aged 18 need accommodation, they will be encouraged to use services such as the rent deposit</p>	<p>The costs will be met from existing resources.</p>	<p>Update in August 2006</p>

		<p>scheme to access private sector accommodation. The introduction of Key 2 housing for high needs care leavers has been successful in helping care leavers adapt to life once they have left Council care – approximately 80% of Key 2 residents are successful in finding employment or training.</p> <p>Changing the Council's allocations policy to give a % of Council accommodation to care leavers each year is not favoured by officers.</p> <p>This recommendation should be tracked by the Scrutiny Committee, who will carry out follow up work if necessary.</p>		
<p>The City Council should continue to view young offenders on a case-by-case basis if they present as homeless and help them to find suitable accommodation where possible.</p>	<p>Dennis Boobier/Housing Options Team</p>	<p>The City Council already supports projects aimed at helping young offenders break the cycle of offending. For example, the REACH and Iris Projects. The City Council provides temporary accommodation (not homelessness accommodation) to young people on these schemes.</p> <p>Contact with HMP Bullingdon and the Probation Service is good, and the Options Team will continue to work with these organisations to help young offenders where they can. Each case will continue to be assessed on an individual basis.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to follow up this area of work in due course.</p>	<p>The costs will be met from current resources</p>	<p>Update in August 2006</p>
<p>The City Council should endorse the principle of the Supporting People strategic review, that each district area in Oxfordshire has a high support needs accommodation service. However, this should not be at the expense of</p>	<p>Val Johnson</p>	<p>Decisions on Supporting People contracts have been made by the Commissioning Body and will be reported to Housing Scrutiny Committee on 25th January. Officers should continue to work to ensure that the impact of cuts on services in Oxford is limited where possible.</p>	<p>There is likely to be difficulty for services that no longer receive SP funding. For example, homelessness services in</p>	<p>Supporting People reports should be presented at</p>

other support services in Oxford.			Oxford face cuts of £370K (including £90,000 for the City Council) in 2006/07. Budget bids have been made to the Executive Board for the £90,000 cut that the City Council is facing.	regular intervals, to be agreed with HSC
The City Council should continue to improve Housing Benefit administration.	Paul Waters	This is part of the Council's ongoing work to improve benefit administration. Officers from the Housing Services Business Unit intend to work with Benefits staff on homelessness cases that are the result of withdrawn benefits.	Costs will be met from current resources	Progress report in 6 months (August 2006)
The City Council should continue to support the development of a supported lodgings scheme for Oxford and extends the scheme if it is a success.	Dennis Boobier	The Supported Lodging scheme is in development at present, a joint City Council/County Council venture. Work will be done to evaluate the success of the scheme once it is in operation.	A budget bid of £80,000 has been submitted to the Executive Board to cover the cost of the scheme in 2006/07.	Progress report in 6 months (August 2006)