

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**5TH DECEMBER 2007**

**NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT SCHEME FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr P.J. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning & Environment

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report introduces the proposals for a Housing Related Support Scheme for younger people across North Worcestershire.
- 1.2 The proposed scheme is being planned to provide three levels of support for younger homeless people:
- I. Floating support services, similar to those currently operating.
  - II. The development of clustered housing with support and training facilities (Foyer Schemes) in Bromsgrove and Kidderminster.
  - III. The development of additional housing solutions for young people with more chaotic lifestyles.
- 1.3 The report is essentially for information as it is proposed that the scheme will be funded through Housing Corporation and Supporting People Grant. However it does offer the Council an opportunity to consider the 'in principle' potential for the Council owned Burcot Lodge Hostel to be converted into self contained supported flats to assist with meeting the needs of clients under level three of the scheme.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Support the proposals to develop a North Worcestershire Housing Related Support Scheme For Younger People.
- 2.2 Nominate the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to be a representative on the proposed Officer / Member Steering Group for the project.
- 2.3 Agree in principle to the longer term more detailed consideration being given to the conversion of Burcot Hostel into self contained flats with support for younger homeless people with chaotic lifestyles.

### **3. LOCAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This Council as housing authority has a statutory duty to assess the needs of the homeless and to provide advice, arrange support and where appropriate secure both temporary and permanent housing solutions.
- 3.2 The major cause of homelessness in the District comes from parental or family exclusion, a cause of homelessness that affects a large number of younger people.
- 3.3 The Council funds and promotes a range of housing advice and homelessness preventative services for younger people and the County Supporting People Team provides a range of support services for younger and homeless people through RSLs and other providers.
- 3.4 Historically the emergency needs of younger people becoming homeless in Bromsgrove have been met through the use of hostel accommodation which has been occupied for lengthy periods before a permanent solution is secured. Whilst occupants of temporary accommodation are linked up with floating support services, placing younger people in hostel or Bed & Breakfast accommodation is not seen to be best practice and accordingly the Council has actioned a programme of de-commissioning three of its four hostels and has actively promoted the delivery of better quality dispersed accommodation for the homeless. However, dispersed accommodation does not meet the needs of all homeless and especially younger homeless clients.
- 3.5 In August the Cabinet decided that the lease of Hamilton House for use by Bromford Housing Group for young homeless people should not be renewed and the property returned for use as general needs housing. Whilst this supported housing scheme had experienced operational difficulties it did provide a valuable resource for younger homeless people.
- 3.6 The continuing demand from younger homeless people, the closure of Hamilton House and the de-commissioning of the Council's own hostels identifies the need for the development of a comprehensive supported housing scheme for younger people to serve this district that provides appropriate levels of support for younger homeless people.

### **4. COUNTYWIDE BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Needs analysis carried out by the District Councils in North Worcestershire shows that there is a higher than expected problem in meeting the housing and support needs of more vulnerable young people. At the same time, the Supporting People programme has identified a number of gaps within the range of supported housing and housing-related support options across the area.

4.2 Organisations, both providers and commissioners, involved in this sector were already aware of the huge spectrum of need surrounding vulnerable young people in Worcestershire. This ranges from:

- Low-level transitional support to enable homeless (or those at risk of homelessness) young people without further complex needs to move-on to education, employment and settled accommodation. This is likely to comprise of flexible low-level floating support for young people in social and private-rented housing, short-term use of accommodation-based schemes such as Foyers, as well as improved use of 'signposting' services.
- More intensive or structured services for those more vulnerable young people needing longer-term engagement to develop skills, confidence and motivation, either via support in their own home or in a transitional accommodation setting. This is likely to be the core client group for the planned Foyers but will work most effectively if it includes the capacity to support a more dispersed network of younger people within the immediate locality.
- The need for longer-term services' and assertive outreach models to meet the complex needs of young people with drug, alcohol, offending or other challenging issues. The Supporting People team brought stakeholders together to carry out a strategic review and identify appropriate solutions to meeting this range of need. It is unlikely that these young people will have the capacity to achieve good outcomes within a communal setting. Therefore Supporting People is in the process of looking at various intensively supported accommodation and support models that enable young people to engage, gain necessary skills and move-on into less supported environments. Services for people with chaotic lifestyles need to be more intensive than those funded only through Supporting People. It is anticipated that such services will need joint funding from Children's Services, Youth Offending Services, the Probation Service, and Drug Services etc in order to give access to specialist support over a 24 hour period.

## **5. SCHEME PROPOSALS**

5.1 A project is being developed as part of an integrated programme of capital investment and revenue expenditure by Supporting People in partnership with district councils to provide a seamless housing and support network covering the whole of the north of the County, including, Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Wyre Forest District Council, Droitwich (the northern area of Wychavon District Council) and Tenbury Wells (the northern area of Malvern Hills District Council).

- 5.2 The project will take account of the migratory nature of young people and of the cross-boundary aspirations of the national Supporting People programme. This includes creating links with bordering services such as the Herefordshire and South Shropshire Foyers, neighbouring Local Authorities etc.
- 5.3 The project aims to enhance, incorporate and/or link a number of existing services, developments and processes within North Worcestershire, meaning that some aspects of the end result are already fixed. This includes:
- Existing Supporting People-funded services, such as Stonham Floating Support, Bromsgrove Youth Housing Forum and Basement Floating Support Services, Redditch Nightstop, Redditch YMCA, St Basils Floating Support and Bromford Floating Support Service.
  - Capital development projects for an RSL to provide 15+bed clustered accommodation schemes (Foyer Schemes) for young people in Kidderminster and Bromsgrove.
  - Ongoing processes for allocation, assessment, consultation and partnership working.
- 5.4 In view of the need to specify desired outcomes for users, providers and ultimately, commissioners, it is anticipated that prospective providers will need to apply a high degree of creativity around these fixed points in order to deliver effective, person-centred services that:
- A. Deliver the specified early, intermediate and later outcomes across the spectrum of need and geographical area
  - B. Meets the specified level of quality ( under the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework Level B or above)
  - C. Operates within the specified budget and meets or exceeds expected Value for Money parameters (approximately £500,000 per year supporting around 100 young people at any time with an equitable distribution across the range of needs)
  - D. Adds maximum value to all levels of outcome through the development and best use of partnerships with other support providers, social and private housing providers, voluntary agencies and statutory agencies such as the Local Authority and Health.
- 5.5 In summary a Housing Related Support Scheme for North Worcestershire is proposed that will incorporate three distinct levels of service:

1. Existing Floating support services already funded and commissioned by Supporting People to enable young homeless people to be successfully housed in dispersed self contained tenancies.
2. Provision of Foyer Schemes in Kidderminster and Bromsgrove offering clustered and supported housing (a development of approx 15 new build self contained flats) for younger people with on site training and support facilities. This would provide housing with support and supervision for younger people who are able to benefit from training to further their home management skills and employment prospects.
3. Develop housing with a higher level of intensity of support for younger people with more chaotic lifestyles on a core and cluster basis (a core of possibly 4 to 6 self contained flats and a number of dispersed units in close proximity providing housing with more intensive support and supervision.

## **6. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 6.1 Floating Support Services as detailed under level 1. in 5.5 above would continue very much as currently operated. Existing floating support providers (e.g. Baseline) would be incorporated in the overall framework of the North Worcestershire Housing Related Support Scheme for Younger People to become part of a more comprehensive joined up service.
- 6.2 With regard to the provision of Foyer Schemes for the client group identified under level 2 above, partnership working between housing officers of Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest and County Supporting People has commenced. To date an RSL Preferred Partner common to both authorities (West Mercia Housing Group) has been selected to progress the delivery of Foyer type affordable housing for younger people in both Bromsgrove and Kidderminster to become a vital element of the overall scheme. West Mercia Housing has identified sites in both Kidderminster and Bromsgrove that have potential to provide clustered flats with training and support facilities for younger people and have submitted bids for development funding to the Housing Corporation.
- 6.3 The final element of the overall scheme will be to identify and provide suitable housing for the clients with more chaotic lifestyles as detailed under level 3 above.
- 6.4 The next stage of the process will be for Worcestershire Supporting People to select a support service provider and commission the support element of the scheme.
- 6.5 It is proposed that an Officer / Member Steering Group with representation from the North Worcestershire authorities and

Supporting People be set up to oversee the project and this report invites the Cabinet to nominate a member to the group.

## **7. FUTURE USE OF BURCOT LODGE HOSTEL**

- 7.1 The Council's programme of de-commissioning homeless hostels is progressing well with Wythall Hostel now closed and Sidemoor and Rubery hostels scheduled for closure in preparation for conversion into self contained flats in November 2007.
- 7.2 For the time being, the Council's fourth hostel (Burcot Lodge) will remain operational and the profile of occupants will be monitored before definite recommendations regarding its closure are made to members. However, looking towards the longer term provision of self contained flats (on a core and cluster basis) for the level of service envisaged for clients with more chaotic lifestyles (as detailed as Level 3 in 5.6 above) Burcot Lodge Hostel is identified as a potential location for conversion or new build accommodation.
- 7.3 For forward planning purposes, members are therefore asked to consider this longer term proposed use for Burcot Lodge Hostel. The recommendation set out in this report asks members to agree 'in principle' to the longer term more detailed consideration being given to the conversion of Burcot Hostel into self contained flats with support for younger homeless people with chaotic lifestyles.

Whilst other suitable locations for this level of supported housing will continue to be identified, members are asked to give an indication to officers whether, subject to the appropriate level of support being included (possibly support workers living on site) they would be prepared to give future consideration to more detailed plans if they are drawn up.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Level 1 and 2 - None to BDC, unless it becomes appropriate to contribute some local authority capital grant. It is proposed that the development of a Foyer (for Level 2 clients) is funded by Housing Corporation Development Grant and the support service costs be met from Supporting People Revenue Grant.
- 8.2 In the future event of Burcot Hostel being released for conversion to self contained accommodation for clients with more chaotic lifestyles under Level 3 of the proposed scheme, then it is possible that the Council will be asked to contribute to the provision of the scheme by donating the land and existing building.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The provision of a comprehensive and joined up housing and support service for younger homeless people across North Worcestershire will assist this Council in providing appropriate and supported accommodation for clients of whom it has a duty to rehouse both on a permanent and temporary basis.

## **10. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 10.1 Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre, Longbridge and Housing)  
Improved standards of housing for homeless people with appropriate support leading to independent living.
- 10.2 Objective 2 – Improvement (Customer Service, Reputation and Performance)  
Improved service to customers by the ability to provide better options for homeless clients.
- 10.3 Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing (Community Influence and Community Events)  
Improved forms of temporary accommodation with appropriate levels of support may influence health and wellbeing.
- 10.4 Priority 4 – Environment – Clean District and Planning  
Appropriate housing and support for homelessness younger people in the community may support better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduce any possibility of negative impact upon the environment.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 11.1 The risk associated with not supporting the overall scheme proposals would be:
- Inability to de-commission the fourth hostel.
  - Reduced ability for the Council to meet its duty to house homeless young people to whom it has a statutory duty.
  - Increased and inappropriate use of hostel and B&B accommodation.
  - Young people being placed in self contained tenancies that are unsustainable, lead to management and neighbourhood difficulties and potentially culminate in repeat homelessness.
- 11.2 In considering the future use of Burcot Hostel for conversion to accommodation for clients with chaotic lifestyles, members should consider the potential impact upon proposals for the town centre and also the potential limitations that it may present to any future expansion plans for the Control Centre.

**12. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Improved service to customers by the ability to provide better options for homeless clients.

**13. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Provision of wider choice and opportunities for potentially vulnerable younger people.

**14. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues None at present.
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management Improved ability to meet legal duties to homeless and performance in service delivery.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Impact of providing appropriate housing with support to vulnerable clients.
Policy None
Environmental None

**15. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes



**16. APPENDICES**

None

**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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