

# HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 130

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Youth Homelessness Strategy</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29 April 2009</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Adult Social Care and Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Rachel Howard</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>296949</b>
	<b>E-mail:</b>	rachel.howard@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

This report covers key actions from the Youth Homelessness Strategy (launched in November 2006) that have been completed in the two years since publication. The Youth Homelessness Strategy was written in the context of the Children and Young Person's Plan, and the Homelessness Strategy, incorporating actions from both.

- 1.1 The national policy context of this strategy is directed by the government white paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Homelessness Prevention agenda.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing notes this report and approves the delivery of the final year of the Youth Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

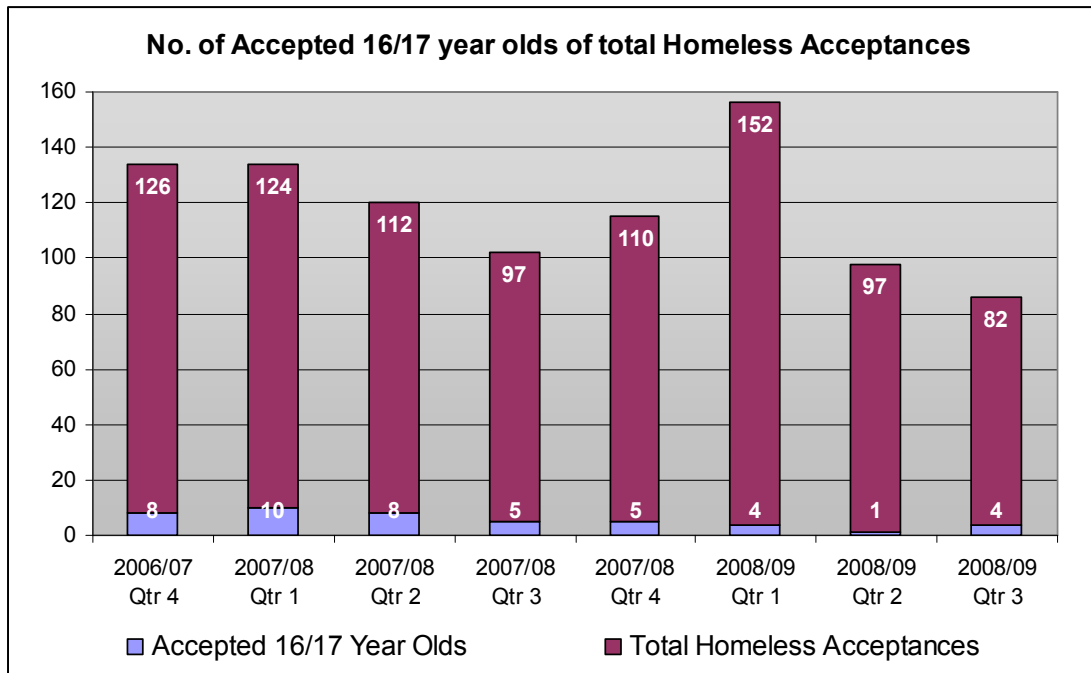
The Youth Homelessness Strategy was produced by the Housing Strategy Division in consultation with The Children and Young People's Trust, the Voluntary and Community sector and with input from young people. The action plan published alongside it was updated in November 2007, and again in December 2008. The Strategy was highlighted by Communities and Local Government as an example of good practice and used as a case study on their National Youth Homelessness Scheme website.

The actions related to working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender homeless young people, especially those relating to the joint working with the voluntary and community sector were also highlighted on the website.

- 3.1.1 In November 2006 the government announced a new target for local authorities to achieve, which was that by 2010 no sixteen or seventeen year olds who were homeless would be placed in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation unless in an emergency. It was recognised that the lack of support staff in this type of emergency accommodation, and the inevitable exposure of young people to adults with complex needs results in them being in situations where risk factors are increased.

- 3.1.2 In September 2006 there were 29 sixteen and seventeen year olds in B&B in Brighton and Hove, placed by the Housing Options Service. By December 2008 this figure had decreased to 2. This change in numbers indicates the success of the Youth Homelessness Strategy and the actions linked to it. Integral to the strategy is the partnership working arrangements that have been entered into by statutory, voluntary and community organisations, and the cross departmental arrangements between Adult Social Care and Housing and the Children and Young People's Trust that have become better defined since the strategy was launched.
- 3.2 Within the action plan for the Youth Homelessness Strategy there are 76 actions in total. Of these, 46 have been achieved since its publication in November 2006. 20 actions have been partially achieved. This indicates that the various teams involved with the Youth Homelessness Strategy, both statutory and voluntary have worked in an integrated way, with the lead coming from Housing Options, and under the direction of the Youth Homelessness Working Group. Of particular note is the improvement of joint working between children's services and housing services that has been achieved. See Appendix 1 – the Youth Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2007 – 2010
- 3.3 When young people become homeless, it is invariably because they have been asked to leave their parents or carers home, due to lifestyle clashes, behaviour issues and financial considerations. There are certain factors in the young person's circumstances that can often indicate early on that they will become homeless in the future. These are: exclusion from school, entrance into the criminal justice system, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and mental health or learning disabilities. Young people with additional support needs often find it difficult to manage the transition to adulthood, and are more likely to be asked to leave the family home by their parents or carers
- 3.4 In recognition of this the Youth Homelessness Strategy was subdivided into 5 objectives, which reflect the complex needs of homeless young people and the integrated methods of working that are necessary to prevent youth homelessness.
- 3.4.1 The paragraphs below are a brief explanation of some of the actions within the Youth Homelessness Strategy that have been achieved since its launch in November 2006. The full action plan of 76 actions is attached as Appendix 1 to give a more detailed breakdown of the work that has been finished, or is still in progress.
- 3.5 **Objective 1** – Intervene early to prevent homelessness –  
In 2008/9 quarter 3 the levels of homelessness amongst sixteen and seventeen year olds has decreased to 3% of the total number of homeless acceptances in Brighton and Hove. The national average is 8%. The target at the outset of the action plan was also 8%. See table 1 below.

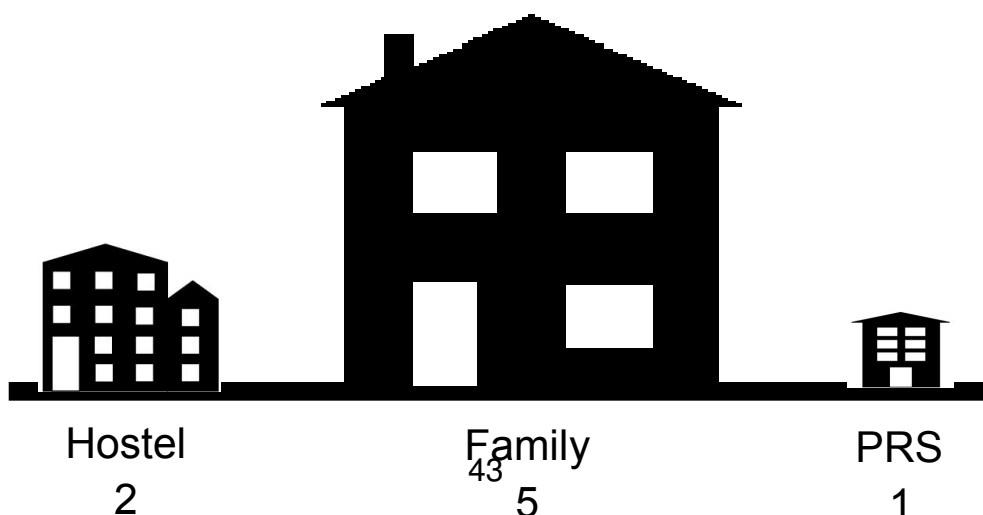
**Table 1**



This has been achieved through Housing Options working jointly with Hove YMCA, working intensively with families providing support to parents, and providing a Respite scheme for young people. This allows them to stay for 3 weeks in a hostel, whilst the relationship with their families is repaired through mediation and support.

The Respite scheme has been operational since October 2008. For the first 4 months (Oct 08 to Jan 09) there were only 12 placements in Bed and Breakfast accommodation of 16 and 17 year olds. This is comparable to 42 placements for the same period last year. This decrease in placements is due to the success of the 'whole family' approach that is embedded within the Respite scheme. Of the eight clients closed this quarter 5 (62.5%) returned to the family home or to another family member (25% of these to wait for a place in supported accommodation) 2 ( 25%) moved straight into supported accommodation and 1(12.5%) moved in to PRS accommodation. See Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Outcomes for closed Respite clients, Qtr 3, 2008-9**



- 3.5.1 In 2007/08 there were 132 people aged 18-25 accepted as homeless. In 2008/09 there were 140. The target for these years was less than 250 homeless acceptances in that age group. The Housing Options Service, with support from Hove YMCA achieved these targets by assisting people to access the private rented sector or supported accommodation, or enabling young people to sustain their present accommodation.
- 3.5.2 A Joint protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds is being implemented by Housing Options and the Children and Young People's Trust, to ensure that any young person in this age group will receive an integrated service, using the Common Assessment Framework.

3.6 **Objective 2** – Provide support to vulnerable young people –  
 The housing needs of vulnerable teenage parents were audited in 2007, and it was identified that there was a gap in supported housing provision for this client group. A successful bid was made in November 2008 by Housing Strategy and the CYPT to the Department of Children Schools and Families for a pilot supported housing project teenage parents. The funding is for 2 years and will allow for an enhanced package of support concentrating on increasing engagement with education employment or training, whilst also improving outcomes for the children of teenage parents.

There are 139 units of supported accommodation for young people aged 16 – 25 provided through the Integrated Support Pathway, funded by Supporting People. The providers are Hove YMCA, Impact Initiative, The Foyer, and Off the Fence 60 units of floating support are provided by Hove YMCA.

All young people under the age of eighteen who are identified at the assessment stage as having a substance misuse issue are now fast tracked to RUOK the under 19s substance misuse service for treatment and an ongoing support.

3.7 **Objective 3** – Address the underlying causes of youth homelessness –  
 Improving access to learning, training and employment ensures that young people are able to remain with their families, enter the private rented sector and share with friends or sustain their tenancies in supported housing. There is now a Connexions Personal Advisor for homeless young people at Hove YMCA Housing Services in the city centre.

3.7.1 All young people who are homeless and accommodated in supported housing or receiving floating support have access to accredited life skills training to allow them to move through the integrated support pathway, and into independent accommodation.

3.8 **Objective 4** – Prevent a new generation of rough sleepers –  
 Every rough sleeper under 25 has a worker who will proactively relocate out of area rough sleepers, or refer those with a local connection to hostel accommodation. In 2007/2008 there were 53 young people relocated out of Brighton and Hove. Where they are aged 16 or 17 there is a co-ordinated response involving Housing Options who organise multi - agency professionals meetings to ensure fast track referrals to substance misuse agencies and mental health services, amongst others, and liaise with the relevant social care team, if there is a child protection element to the case. Additionally, in four street-counts

of rough sleepers carried out during 2008/09 only two of those found were under the age of 25.

3.8.1 All supported housing providers have signed up to an Eviction Protocol, to ensure that a multi agency meeting occurs before any young person is evicted (and therefore runs the risk of rough sleeping) from a supported housing project.

3.9 **Objective 5** – Provide a wider range of housing options for young people - Through partnership working under the direction of the Youth Homelessness Working Group a move-on group was set up involving supported housing providers, Housing Options, Hove YMCA Housing Advice Service and representatives from the CYPT. A move-on protocol has been developed to enhance the support work around move-on already being done, and a workshop organised in October 2008 for front line workers to increase their skills in this area.

3.9.1 A Private Sector Development worker funded by Supporting People in quarter 3 2008/2009 was able to assist 40 (56%) of young people aged 18 -25 who were threatened with homelessness into the private rented sector.

#### 4. **CONSULTATION**

Consultation on the updating of the Youth Homelessness Strategy action plan was done through the Youth Homelessness Working Group, which sits beneath the Homelessness and Social Exclusion Steering Group. Membership includes managers from the CYPT - including the Youth Offending Team, Integrated Youth Support Services, Social care, the Post 16 Team, Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health, and RUOK (the under 19 substance misuse service) Also represented are B&HCC Housing Options Service, Supporting People, and providers such as Hove YMCA, Impact Initiatives, The Foyer, and Friends First.

4.1 Hove YMCA has also carried out consultation with young people and parents, on their experiences of homelessness services for young people, which has influenced the design of services, especially the Respite scheme.

#### 5. **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### 5.1 Financial Implications:

None. All budgets relating to the strategy have already been set.

Finance officer Consulted: Neil Smith Date: 09/03/09

##### 5.2 Legal Implications:

The are no legal implications.

Lawyer consulted: Simon Court Date: 8 April 2009

### 5.3 Equalities Implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Housing Options Service which actions many of the objectives in the Youth Homelessness Strategy is being carried out in spring/summer 2009. This will look at our work with young people and examine the equalities implications of our service delivery.

- 5.3.1 There are still some actions in the Youth Homelessness Strategy relating to equalities that haven't been achieved. The Youth Homelessness Working group will be implementing a task and finish group to ensure that these action are prioritised.

### 5.4 Sustainability Implications:

With reference to the sustainable communities agenda, this ensures family and community cohesion, by encouraging young people to remain within the family home, to engage in education, employment and training and to address support needs that may affect their communities, such as drug and alcohol misuse, or involvement in the criminal justice system.

### 5.4 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Addressing the causes of youth homelessness and therefore preventing young people from becoming homeless decreases offending and anti-social behaviour amongst this cohort.

### 5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

The Youth Homelessness Strategy is relevant to the following indicators that have been identified as key priorities within the Brighton and Hove Local Area Agreement:

- N1 116 – Proportion of children living in poverty
- NI 112 – Teenage pregnancy
- NI 156 – Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation
- N1 117 – Number of 16-18 year olds in work, education or training
- N1 141 – Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living
- NI 40 – Drug users in effective treatment

### 5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The Youth Homelessness Strategy is part of the wider Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy, and illustrates the directorate priorities of Adult Social Care and Housing which are:

Reducing Inequality

Working in partnership to improve the commissioning and provision of services

Providing homes to meet the needs of the city

It also feeds into the Corporate Priorities:

Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity

Better use of public money

Fair enforcement of the law

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

Not necessary

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

For information only

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. The updated Youth Homelessness Strategy action plan

**Background Documents**

1. Youth Homelessness Strategy 2007-10

