

Summary Sheet

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Directorate Leadership Team
14th March 2019

Report Title: The House Project

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jon Stonehouse, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Christian Palfrey- Project Manager, The House Project, Leaving Care

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

The House Project is a concept developed originally by Stoke on Trent City Council in response to recognition that young people leaving the care of the local authority faced significant barriers to accessing permanent, safe, secure and suitable accommodation.

The key elements of the project were the offer of suitable, safe and long-term post care housing alongside a holistic and bespoke package of training and support that focused on increasing young people's independent living and personal skills and their participation in education, employment and training (EET).

The co-operative model aimed to increase young people's sense of community and integration, and choice in their transitions from care to independent adulthood. A key aim of the project was to reduce the feelings of isolation and powerlessness that many care leavers can experience after leaving care.

Rotherham was one of the areas to be approached by the DfE to become part of the next phase of Innovation projects. The project attracts £370,000 of DfE funding.

The Cabinet and Commissioners Decision Making Meeting on the 11th June 2018 approved that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) become part of the next phase of DfE Innovation Funded Projects to explore the feasibility of developing an alternative housing solution for Care Leavers in Rotherham.

Recommendations

1. That Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) approve the extension of the House Project, including the extension of the three staff members from March 2020 to March 2022.
Project Cohort Timeline (Appendix A)
2. That it be acknowledged that Rotherham Care Leavers will continue to be responsible for the design, development and delivery of the project and will be supported by a range of officers from across the Council to ensure the project is delivered within the principles and practices of RMBC as well as the vision and principles of the project.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix A House Project Cohort Timeline
Appendix B Profiled Budget Forecast

Background Papers

DfE Evaluation Report 'Making a House a Home – Stoke House Project March 2017

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

The House Project

1. Recommendations

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- 1.2 That it be acknowledged that Rotherham Care Leavers will continue to be responsible for the design, development and delivery of the project and will be supported by a range of officers from across the Council to ensure the project is delivered within the principles and practices of RMBC as well as the vision and principles of the project.

2. Background

- 2.1 In October 2018 the Leaving Care Service launched the House Project (HP) and recruited a Project Manager and two Project Facilitators.
- 2.2 The initial work concentrated on developing the recruitment and selection procedure with some of our care leavers that ensured those selected successfully had shown commitment and they gained a sense of achievement from completing the selection process.
- 2.3 The only eligibility criteria were to be the correct age and in education, employment or training or willing to work towards this. The HP did approach one of our young parents but they felt the timing of the project was not suitable for them. Four of the selected young people have an EHC plan for SEND needs. Support needs include mental health & physical health needs, substance misuse needs and risk of criminality. Young people are exploring and forming their identity. The project supports in offering a safe environment.
- 2.4 Two young people are siblings that currently live in different placements in Barnsley and Huddersfield. We plan on moving them into HP properties that are close to each other, promoting important family networks and in line with their wishes and feelings.
- 2.5 Between the 10 young people they have experienced 41 placement moves and have voiced excitement about their future plans to have a flat which they will make their secure and long term home.
- 2.6 Ten young people have been selected for the HP. Current placement costs are £1,051,962. Two placed in Foster Care, five in Residential Children's Homes, three in Semi-independent accommodation. Four are placed out of authority in Northumberland, Huddersfield, Barnsley and Lincoln respectively.
- 2.7 Two young people were in out of authority placements at the point of identifying them for the HP. Working with them the HP has supported them to move back to Rotherham into Semi-independent placements with the plan to complete the

six month HP independence programme before progressing to their HP property.

- 2.8 The HP has worked closely with the young people's placements, ensuring inclusivity for those out of authority to be part of the six- month HP independence programme. This has included a young person staying overnight in Rotherham once a week with staff support so they can attend the weekly sessions on a Monday night and complete 1:1 work with their project facilitator. The HP has capacity to be flexible and creative with the support it can offer to help those that are out of authority return back to Rotherham.
- 2.9 At the time of this report a further 60 young people are placed in out of authority residential children's homes. The House Project will aim to support 3 to 5 out of authority placements each year.
- 2.10 The six month independence programme started in January 2019 and will run until July 2019. Over the six months the 10 young people will meet weekly on a Monday from 17:00-19:00 and see their project facilitators once a week for one to one key working sessions.

In the weekly meetings to date they have:

- Decided on the ground rules for when they meet and the structure to the meetings
- Attended an Art Graffiti session and met the National House Project film company
- Planned a two day outdoor residential trip and attended the trip
- Started initial planning for a House Project short film & attended a National House Project Conference day in Oxford.
- Attended an Online Safety & Healthy Relationship workshop
- Attended a Substance Misuse workshop

The remaining weekly meetings have been planned and some examples of what is coming up can be seen below:

- To plan and run an activity that benefits others
- To make a film about their local House project
- To plan and manage a meeting to develop policy for safety and what to do when things go wrong
- Learn basic DIY skills
- Learn how to complete a basic project management plan for refurbishing a property
- Complete a short first aid course
- Attend a money master class with the potential to achieve a Level 1 Personal Money Management accreditation
- Attend a Mental Health awareness workshop

- 2.11 The two project facilitators meet each young person once a week to provide individual key working support. They have been focusing on developing young people's resilience by developing their interests and hobbies. This has included attending dance, boxing, and music and art classes.

- 2.12 They will work with each young person to develop their independence skills and this is evidenced in their portfolio folder. This will be certificated by the National House Project and potentially used to award them the living independently ASDAN course.
- 2.13 The support also focuses on ensuring our young people are in employment, training or education. Four young people have joined the project as NEET. One has attended the Princes Trust one week 'Game design programme', one has secured a two week work experience place with Fortem maintenance team as they have an interest in becoming a plumber, one has applied for a health assistant apprenticeship and been offered an interview and one is exploring the RMBC 30 day placements to experience different jobs and build confidence.
- 2.14 The HP is in the process of securing a psychology service to support the project. It is expected that this will be in place by the 29.03.19 and is built into the cost of the HP.

In terms of specific psychological support for the House Project this will include:

Two days of 'team formulations': to help the team make sense of a young person's story to help inform team understanding and support for the young person. These 'team formulations', where possible and safe, with input from the young person, help to develop a sense of shared understanding, hopefully helping to improve 'caregiver sensitivity' and consistency of approach.

One day per month psychological consultation for the team (to include individual time for the project manager, and project facilitators and time to bring 'team' together): clinical supervision/psychological consultation to support the team's own well-being and ongoing 'formulation' and practice of their work with young people, with a particular emphasis on understanding the impact of complex trauma on systems of support.

- 2.15 The HP has been working with services across the borough to support the project. Divert have delivered substance misuse workshops. Fortem have offered to help our young people with the refurbishment work in their flats, initially by helping with the project planning and then providing skilled workers from their maintenance team to assist and guide our young people through the refurbishment work.
- 2.16 The HP has developed partnerships within the council and has worked with housing to secure 10 properties that will be leased to the Leaving Care service. Agreements have been reached that the HP will be covering full cost for these properties. Once the young person is ready and those supporting them agree the property will return to the Housing and Communities Service portfolio and the young person will become a council tenant. The Housing and Communities Service has been very supportive and helpful towards the HP.
- 2.17 The HP has been working with virtual schools for those returning from out of authority to support a smooth transition back. The HP group of 10 will deliver a short presentation at the designated teacher network event on the 08.04.2019 to create awareness of the project to training providers.

- 2.18 The National House Project hold monthly meetings for all the local authorities that have the House Project. These are called 'Community of Practice days' and are open to all the HP staff members and will cover different themes from developing the EET offer to workshops on 'attachment' delivered by Changing Minds, psychological service. The National House Project Young Persons Steering Group meets every six weeks and our HP has been in attendance at every meeting.
- 2.19 The National HP attends each LA monthly to meet the individual teams. In addition to these meetings Project Managers only from April 2019 will now attend a quarterly meeting and the location will rotate between the different LA.
- 2.20 The feedback from the National House project is that they are pleased with the progress made and how well we know our young people. They have full confidence that we will have a great House Project.
- 2.21 The HP currently has a 'Participation and Young Person's Apprentice' position advertised as being ring fenced for care leavers. This is the first time leaving care has had the option to do this.
- 2.22 The post is funded by the HP and the role will include work with the leaving care teams to support and develop effective participation and co-production of ideas with our care leavers, represent Rotherham at the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum and assist the Leaving Care Team to support other young people to participate.
- 2.23 Experience shows that where services have employed a participation worker who is care experienced that there is an added credibility to the function. It creates an authenticity to the role as the worker understands the realities of being a care leaver. Experience also shows that when services employ care experienced young people in participation functions, engagement increases.
- 2.24 The apprenticeship is a temporary post, fixed term for 18 months. They will have the option to achieve a level 2 or 3 qualification in Youth Work. In the second year we will look for opportunities within the LA to progress the young person so they remain employed. Apprentices would be allowed access to the talent pool in the last three months of their contract.
- 2.25 The HP is two months into the six month induction programme and focus areas for 2019 include:
- To view and accept the 10 properties and complete the refurbishment work.
 - To complete the six month induction programme and independence work for participants in their 1:1 support sessions.
 - Further develop the HP policy through co-production in the weekly meetings.
 - To test out their properties before moving in.
 - Plan a House Project Graduation.

- Develop the House Project promotional material and to promote the HP to the next cohort.
- Attend the National House Project Independence workshop.

2.26 It is planned that the refurbishment work will be completed before the end of the six month induction and the 10 young people will get to try their flats out for short-periods of time before fully moving into them. The project facilitators will create a short 'taster flat experience' that will allow them to get to know their home and complete tasks from locating the 'stop cock' to phoning the gas company.

2.27 Colleagues from RMBC have been invited to an independence workshop. The workshop arranged for the 22nd March 2019 is to consider the possible options available to house projects and local authorities in relation to independence. It will be an opportunity to hear about different models, share thoughts and ideas and think about what model suits local authorities best. The workshop will be facilitated by Heather Rolinson from the DFE Innovation Unit.

2.28 Previous determinations were that Rotherham's HP would mirror independence by leasing the properties to the Leaving Care Service. Care Leavers will be responsible for the design, development and delivery of the project. To date this has been working well and allows our young people to take ownership, responsibility and increase their sense of community. All future plans and developments with regards to the House Project will be in line with RMBC values and direction.

3. Key Issues/ Risks/Concerns/Mitigation

3.1 The work for securing the second cohort of ten young people will need to commence in October 2019 to ensure the cohort timeline is adhered to. This is also particularly relevant for those placed out of authority. This allows the House Project staff time to develop a relationship with that young person.

3.2 If the House Project concludes in March 2020 then the current cohort of 10 young people would have only been placed in their properties for 8/9 months. Due to a delay in starting the project those 10 young people would lose the support from the House Project before some of them are ready. An exit plan would need to be devised that includes filling this gap in support by using existing services within the leaving care team or partner agencies.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

4.1 **Option 1:** The project is not extended in March 2020 and the staff team's contracts are not renewed. The apprentice position would complete the remaining duration of their contract in the other leaving care teams. The current 10 young people would continue to be supported by the leaving care teams and partner agencies if required.

4.2 **Option 2:** It is recommended that Rotherham approve the extension of the House Project from March 2020 to March 2022.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Presentation and approval at DLT.
- 5.2 The Housing and Communities Service has been consulted.
- 5.3 Media and Communications team have been consulted and supports the project.
- 5.4 Significant informal consultation has occurred with Care Leavers who are supportive.
- 5.5 Informal consultation with social workers evidences that they are supportive of the project. Within the last two months since the project has started to take shape we are seeing social workers actively approaching us about the House Project.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 The current House Project will be live until March 2020.
- 6.2 This proposed extension is for a two year period until March 2022. A detailed project plan will be developed with the Leaving Care Service.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The project will receive £370,000 of DfE Innovation Funding, although each staged payment will be reliant on Rotherham CYPS achieving the previous phase. To date £240,000 has been received and discussions are ongoing with the National House Project for the dates of the remaining two payments. The project is on target to receive all payments.
- 7.2 The House Project aims to have a cohort of 10 young people per annum, with the first identified cohort of 10 care leavers consists of 5 residential, 2 independent fostering and 3 semi-independent placements. The gross estimated placement savings of the first cohort are £1.052m, with £565k of placement cost reductions linked to the House Project included in the CYPS financial recovery plan. The remaining £487k being available to be redirected to the House Project to fund the service when DfE innovation monies are exhausted, see appendix B for details.
- 7.3 The estimated gross savings per annum of the project are as follows:

Year	Gross Aggregate Saving	Cost of Service	Saving
2019/20	£0.736m	£0.372m	£0.364m
2020/21	£1.481m	£0.397m	£1.084m
2021/22	£2.230m	£0.403m	£1.827m

**The above savings assumes that 70% of young people in the cohort successfully complete the project. The funding also does not take account of naturally reductions from young people turning 18.*

7.4 The CYPS financial recovery plan assumes an aggregate saving of £2.073m over a 3 year period which will be achieved based on a 70% or greater success rate.

7.5 The report proposes that the staffing structure for the project is extended until 31 March 2022. The team consists of a Band L Project Manager, 2 * Band G facilitators and an apprentice at an annual cost of £139,556 in 2019/20.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The proposals contained in this report raised a number of legal issues that were worked through in detail as part of the original project.

8.2 Some of these areas included the types of tenancy and licensing agreements utilised, as well as the requirements to support the young people to manage the properties.

9. Human Resources Implications

9.1 This proposal would require the Project Manager, two Project Facilitators and the apprentice post to be extended until March 2022

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

10.1 The Project addresses those issues and difficulties facing young people as they transition from a regulated placement into their own accommodation. This project therefore directly impacts on services and support for young people aged 16 – 21.

10.2 Early indications from the initial evaluation of 'Making a House a Home' Stoke's House Project published by DfE in March 2017 suggested that young people are settling into their new routines and homes and that participation in the project had been a valuable experience for them.

10.3 The extension of the project offers potential invest to save opportunities in terms of the placement decisions, costs associated with LAC placements and as young people move into adulthood.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

11.1 Care Leavers are a distinct group within their peer group who face multiple adversities and challenges as a result of becoming looked after and then leaving the care of the authority.

11.2 This project seeks to redress these aspects by offering young people the opportunity to develop and manage an arrangement that supports them become active and full participants in society. It encourages equality of access

and encourages opportunities to build self-esteem and belief. Young people will be the focus for the project and will lead the project with support from colleagues and partners across the borough.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

12.1 The project requires close working with colleagues within the council from housing, finance and legal services. Strong relationships are already in place and this project will build on these relationships. Housing and finance colleagues have been heavily involved in the discussions for the project and consider it a project worthy of investigation.

12.2 There are developing relationships with external partners as a result of a focus on supporting more young people into education employment or training. Partners are keen to work with our young people and look at innovative ways to support this.

12.3 There are also existing and increasingly well established relationships with the Police, Adult Mental Health and adult social care as a result of the work routinely undertaken to support young people make safe and secure transitions as well as the management of risk. The service would utilise these relationships to develop the project and seek further support.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 If a young person left the project, this may affect the amount of placement savings if another young person is not available to take their space on the project.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Jon Stonehouse, Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services

Ian Walker as Head of Service for LAC and Leaving Care

Sharon Sandell – Service Manager Leaving Care

Approvals Obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services		
Service Manager of Legal Services	Rebecca Pyle	12.03.2019
Head of Procurement (if appropriate)	Not required	N/A
Head of Human Resources (if appropriate)	Amy Leech	06.03.19

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

House Project Cohort Timeline

November 2018- December 2019

Identify young people for the House Project **cohort 1**

January 2019- June 2019

Cohort 1- Six-month training programme to develop their necessary independence skills

July 2019-August 2019

Cohort 1- Move into a property and sign a House Project/leaving care tenancy.
Support continues

October 2019- December 2019

Identify young people for the House Project **cohort 2**

January 2020- June2020

Cohort 2 -Six month training programme

March 2020

York University complete their evaluation of the five local authorities chosen to have the House Project. Funding ends and project is now financially sustainable

July 2020-September 2020

It is estimated that the majority of the House Project properties with the **1st cohort** will transfer back to LA and they would sign introductory tenancies with Housing

July 2020- August 2020

Cohort 2- Move into a property and sign a house project/leaving care tenancy.
Support continues

October 2020 -December 2020

Identify young people for the House Project **cohort 3**

January 2021- July 2021

Cohort 3-Six month training programme

July 2021-September 2021

It is estimated that the majority of the House Project properties with the **2nd cohort** will transfer back to LA and they would sign introductory tenancies with Housing

July 2021- August 2021

Cohort 3- Move into a property and sign a house project/leaving care tenancy.
Support continues

January 2022- March 2022

Cohort 3-Handover of support to leaving care accommodation services or partner agencies where required. Those ready will sign introductory tenancy and become a council tenant

Appendix B

House Project projected Income and Expenditure

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	SET UP YEAR			
	£	£	£	£
Revenue (redirection from placement profile)		55,860	396,703	402,803
Innovation Funding	- 53,000	- 317,000		
Total income	- 53,000	- 317,000	396,703	402,803
Rent - HRA		45,000	45,900	46,818
Accommodation costs (Repairs, void property costs)	5,565	28,700	29,274	29,859
Refurbishment of houses	-	75,000	75,000	75,000
Project support staff	39,870	139,556	156,055	159,176
Project support costs	7,564	84,604	90,474	91,950
Total costs	53,000	372,860	396,703	402,803
Placement Savings				
Projected placement savings on project - Year 1		1,051,752	1,402,336	1,402,336
Projected placement savings on project - Year 2			713,509	1,070,264
Projected placement savings on project - Year 3				713,509
Budget profile for placement savings - Year 1		565,344	753,792	753,792
Budget profile for placement savings - Year 2			565,344	753,792
Budget profile for placement savings - Year 3				565,344
Total project saving against budget profile		- 486,408	- 796,709	- 1,113,181
Total savings against revenue requirement		- 430,548	- 400,007	- 710,378

