

North East Derbyshire District Council

Cabinet

9 March 2016

North East Derbyshire Ambition Mediation Service Policy

**Report No EAH/12/15-16/CG of Councillor Mrs E A Hill, Portfolio Holder with
Responsibility for Housing Strategy and Social Inclusion**

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- Approval of new policy for Ambition Mediation Service. The service is to be run through the Housing Ambition Project which is hosted by North East Derbyshire District Council.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 NEDDC is host authority on both the Housing Ambition Project and Sheffield City Region (SCR) Ambition. North Derbyshire Housing Ambition is an innovative project funded through the DCLG Single Homeless Fund released in 2014. Through Derbyshire Homeless Officers Group (DHOG) a bid was submitted for £150,000 to deliver a specialist housing project for young people aged 16 to 24. A key element of the project is its direct links with the Sheffield City Region Ambition project, also hosted by NEDDC. SCR Ambition provides intensive support for 18-24 year olds to assist them in to employment, education or training (EET).
- 1.2 Prevention of homelessness in young people is key to the Housing Ambition Project and the introduction of a mediation service is one key tool in preventing young people from becoming homeless in a crisis.
- 1.3 Positive outcomes from the Ambition Mediation Service would be that conflict within the household is resolved and the young person can remain in the family home, that conflict is resolved to the extent that the young person can remain in the family home whilst they find alternative accommodation and move in a managed way thus preventing them becoming homeless in a crisis, or conflict is resolved to the extent that that the young person still has to leave the family home however lines of communication remain open and the family support network is still available to the young person as they move into independent living.

- 1.4 As well as positive outcomes for young people the Ambition Mediation Service seeks to save money for Local Authorities across the project area, at County level and to the wider public purse (e.g. health, criminal justice) by preventing homelessness. The cost of a homeless application to a local authority is estimated to be in the region of £5,000 per case, the cost at County level of a 16 / 17 year old being taken into care due to being homeless is estimated at £53,000 per year by Derbyshire County Council and the cost to the wider public purse of a person remaining street homeless for 12 months is estimated at anywhere between £11,000 and £26,000 per year depending upon the services used.
- 1.5 Mediation training has been funded by our partners in health via the Health & Housing Fund. The 10 officers who have been trained all already work for NEDDC within the SCR Ambition, Housing Ambition & Housing Options Teams.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the Ambition Mediation Service Policy (**Appendix 1**) for adoption by the Housing Ambition & SCR Ambition Teams based at NEDDC.
- 2.2 This will enable the Housing Ambition Project to achieve its stated aim of reducing homelessness for young people thus improving outcomes for young people who are threatened with homelessness.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation has taken place both internally and with key external partner in Social Care, Multi Agency Teams and Housing.
- 3.2 Senior officers have been consulted.
- 3.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment (**Appendix 2**) has been carried out as part of the development process of the policy, a copy of which is included with this report.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Council have implemented the Housing Ambition Project along with its stated aims of implementing a positive pathway for young people in housing needs with a strong focus on prevention of homelessness.
- 4.2 The Ambition Mediation Scheme is a key element of the wider Housing Ambition Project.
- 4.3 Not implementing the Ambition Mediation Policy would be detrimental to the project and would be an impediment to it achieving its aim to reduce homelessness amongst and improve outcomes for young people.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 The implementation of the Ambition Mediation Service Policy has no cost to the Council as the work will be carried out by existing staff and via external funding.

Training has also been carried out using external funding. Implementation of the policy is likely to lead to cost savings for the authority in preventing homelessness although these are currently not quantifiable. Existing mediation schemes running along similar lines quote an 80 – 87% success rate so it is reasonable to expect positive outcomes from this approach.

5.1.2 Funding for the entire Housing Ambition project comes to end in December 2016. Options for continued funding are being explored via partners including Children and Younger Adults (CAYA) at Derbyshire County Council, Public Health, Homeless Prevention funds. We are also speaking with colleagues in Sheffield City Region funded Ambition to establish how we may offer the project across the City Region with a view to securing additional funding to enable this continuation.

5.1.3 We are also considering the potential impacts and income streams that could be achieved through developing an accommodation offer as part of the project via private sector leasing. This is proven to be self funding if successful and it is a realistic option for securing the ongoing future of Housing Ambition.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

5.2.1 Specific information relating to mediation cases will be held in a secure folder on the Council's computer network. Access is restricted to the Ambition teams, Strategic Housing and their immediate line management. All information pertaining to the Ambition Mediation Service is managed in line with the Data Protection Act.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

5.3.1 Mediation will be carried out by existing Officers. Access to the mediation scheme is to be strictly controlled whilst the extent of the need for the service is gauged. It is not envisaged that mediation will take up a significant amount of each individual officer's time due to there being a pool of 10 mediators on which to draw. Requests for officer time to carry out mediation will be made via the officer's manager so that workloads can be managed.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That members agree to the Ambition Mediation Service Policy.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? (A Key Decision is one which results in income or expenditure to the Council of £50,000 or more or which has a significant impact on two or more District wards)	No
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	<p>Providing our customers with an excellent service – supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people</p> <p>Supporting our communities to be healthier, safer, cleaner & greener – contributing to improving health and well being</p> <p>Unlocking growth potential – supporting young people into employment</p>

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1 2	Ambition Mediation Service Policy Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Equalities Impact Assessment for the Ambition Mediation Service Policy	
Report Author	Contact Number
Joanna Hayes North Derbyshire Housing Ambition Co-ordinator	(01246) 217319