

Subject:	Connexions Service		
Date of Meeting:	17 February 2011		
Report of:	Strategic Director, People		
Contact Officer:	Name:	James Dougan	Tel: 29-5511
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No: CAB20921	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 7, Access to Information Rule 5 and Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act as amended (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that the consultation ended on 7 February 2011 and sufficient time was required to properly consider and address the responses within the report.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This document outlines the proposed redesigned provision for Brighton & Hove City Council to continue to fulfil its statutory responsibilities to provide a Connexions Service which provides a package of support for young people aged 13-19 years and up to 25 years for young people with Learning Difficulties / Disabilities / Special Educational Needs (LDD/SEN).
- 1.2 The proposed service redesign has been developed over many months to ensure the council fulfils its statutory responsibilities and provides services to young people in line with the anticipated direction of travel for impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) services. It allows for transitional support to schools to enable them to achieve their changing statutory IAG responsibilities, aims to reflect the manner in which targeted services to young people are being delivered across the city, and reflects the challenging national and local context in which savings are needed and the costs of delivering services needs to be reduced.
- 1.3 The proposed service redesign recognises the importance of these services to young people, as indicated within the Equalities Impact Assessment to the Education Bill currently being considered by parliament :
"It is notoriously hard to determine the impact of improving careers guidance on outcomes. The costs of not helping young people improve their outcomes can potentially be very significant. For example, differences in outcomes for a young person who was not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to a young person who was, have been valued at an average of £56,000 in public finance costs before retirement age (e.g. welfare payments, cost to health, criminal justice services, loss of tax and national insurance revenue) and the opportunity costs to the economy are even higher. Better careers guidance and

targeted support would be expected to help reduce these social costs and enable pupils to make better education and careers choices."

- 1.4 Currently, the Connexions Service for Brighton & Hove provides support on issues relevant to young people, as outlined in The Education and Skills Act 2008. This support currently includes impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG); careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG); support for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); NEET prevention services; and support for professionals working with young people. A glossary of terms to assist the understanding of the current and proposed service can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.5 Mainstream and special schools/colleges have link Connexions Personal Advisers, (both IAG and Intensive PAs) who visit the institution on a regular basis, offering careers Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) and more intensive support such as around sexual health and substance misuse issues.
- 1.6 Support is provided to young people who are not in education via a range of community-based Connexions PLUS Centres. A universal drop-in service is available from Monday-Friday and runs in a different area of the city each day to facilitate access for young people. Young people can also book a careers guidance appointment at their local Connexions PLUS Centre.
- 1.7 Young people who need additional support can be allocated a Personal Adviser (Intensive) to help them address barriers such as homelessness, teenage pregnancy or other more social care issues. In addition, the Connexions grant funds a large part of the IYSS infrastructure, including Connexions PLUS public access buildings and administrative centres, ICT hardware and support, staff training, marketing and publicity materials and careers education support for schools including web-based materials. Connexions PAs also provide help with benefits, finding job vacancies and provide intensive support to young people who cannot make easy progress into employment, training or education.
- 1.8 As described below the existing Connexions service currently delivers more than the current statutory requirements. The legal responsibility for delivering many of the services currently held within Connexions will shift to maintained schools as and when the Education Bill becomes law. Additionally there have been a number of studies which have highlighted weaknesses in the Connexions model. The grant for Connexions work has significantly diminished as described in the financial implications of this report, and any service design needs to sit within a city-wide framework of support for young people.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers and approves the proposed model for a redesigned Connexions Service outlined in this report.

3. THE LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSED SERVICE REDESIGN

- 3.1 The law in relation to the delivery of services via the Connexions services and the delivery and recognition of the need for a professional careers service is in a state of flux.
- 3.2 Members may recall that previously between 1974 to 1994 local education authorities had a statutory duty to provide a careers service under sections 8 to 10 of the Employment and Training Act 1973. The 1973 Act was then amended and transferred the responsibility for the careers service from LEAs to the Secretary of State. Under the previous Government, in 2001, Connexions was implemented and the careers service subsumed completely within the new Connexions structure. Subsequently, in line with the social inclusion agenda, the emphasis for careers advice was shifted away from universal schools provision to those not in education, employment or training.
- 3.3 The statutory duties of Local Authorities in relation to the provision of services currently delivered by Connexions are much narrower in scope than the current provision of services within the city. The statutory duties are as follows:
 - 3.3.1 A duty to exercise functions to ensure that children aged 16 -18 who have not obtained 2 GCSEs are participating effectively in education or training. (s10 Education and Skills Act 2008)
 - 3.3.2 A duty to identify those children mentioned above who are in their area and are not in work, education or training (“identify the NEETS”) (s12 Education and Skills Act 2008)
 - 3.3.3 A duty to provide such services as it considers necessary to young persons and relevant adults to encourage, enable or assist them in participating in education or training (s68 Education and Skills Act 2008)
 - 3.3.4 A duty to conduct an assessment in the last year of school of any SEN statemented child they believe will leave school at 16, as to the plan for post school education or training. (S139A Learning and Skills Act 2000)
 - 3.3.5 A duty to provide all pupils at school aged 14-16 with a programme of careers advice. This duty is only on the LA for Pupil Referral Units. In all other circumstances, the duty falls on the head teacher / governing body. (s43 Education Act 1997)
- 3.4 In 2009, Alan Milburn published a report into social mobility (commissioned by the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown), *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*. The report was highly critical of the provision of career services and judged Connexions an expensive failure. It should be understood that it was the model of delivery that was found to have failed and not the dedicated individuals working within it. The report identified careers guidance as failing to overcome the effects of social and economic disadvantage on young people. Users of the careers service also reported that it was not meeting their needs.
- 3.5 Recognising that the Connexions service was not working, in October 2009 the then Labour Government published *“Quality, Choice and Aspiration: a strategy for young people’s information”*. The report identified the need for a “radical

change in the way Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is delivered.” The strategy aimed to place schools and parents at the centre of IAG. It recognised the need for a step change in on-line advice and guidance so that “we can deliver a truly 21st century IAG service.”

- 3.6 The Education Bill was introduced on 26 January 2011, the second reading recently took place on 8 February. The Equalities Impact Assessment conducted for the Education Bill states: “Evidence shows inconsistent quality and access to careers education and IAG. It also suggests that the Connexions Service is not consistently providing high quality careers guidance to all young people or value for money.”
- 3.7 The Bill proposes major reforms to careers advice services, which the proposed model seeks to take into account.
- 3.8 Alongside the establishment of an all-age careers service, the Education Bill will require schools to provide independent careers advice, It will also seek to focus local authorities’ duties on providing targeted support to vulnerable young people, those not in education, employment or training and young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities up to age 25. Thus under the new bill the legal duties of the local authority will change, and legal duties to provide much of the current Connexions service will shift to maintained schools.
- 3.9 The Education Act 1997 will be amended to require maintained schools and pupil referral units in England to secure independent careers guidance for pupils in the school year in which they reach the age of 14 until they have ceased to be of compulsory school age. The government has confirmed that it remains committed to implementing the increase in the participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.
- 3.10 The Bill proposes options which will allow schools, who are most keenly aware of a young person’s needs and circumstances, to secure appropriate careers guidance and give LAs greater flexibility to provide targeted support in a way that meets the needs of local young people. It will do this by:
 - removing the Secretary of State’s direction making powers in relation to local authority services to promote participation and revising guidance on the targeted services we expect local authorities to deliver. These new arrangements will see LAs no longer providing a universal careers guidance offer;
 - placing a single, simplified duty on schools requiring them to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for all pupils in the third and fourth key stages of their education;
 - bringing together guidance resources for young people and adults in an all-age careers service, as a source of expert advice and guidance on careers; and
 - reducing bureaucratic provisions to achieve a more efficient, cost-effective service.
- 3.11 Schools will be free to decide how that guidance is secured-through the all-age service or through another provider, all of whom will be expected to meet exacting quality standards. The premise is this will safeguard the partnership

model in which schools draw on their knowledge of pupils' needs and work closely with external independent advisers with expert knowledge and skills. The Bill provides that the guidance must be impartial, and must also include information on all 16 to 18 education or training options, including apprenticeships.

- 3.12 In addition to the legislative context of the service redesign, on November 4th 2011, Skills Minister John Hayes announced the creation of a new all-age careers service. Both young people aged 13-19 and adults will be able to begin accessing new arrangements for careers guidance from September 2011. It is planned that the service will be fully operational by April 2012. It will build on the best of Next Step and Connexions and provide a fully joined up service for all age groups for the first time. The all-age careers service will be delivered through a range of channels –online, telephone and in the community.
- 3.13 Based on these assumptions, the opportunity to redesign the Connexions service allows us to focus our efforts on employability issues for the 16 – 18 NEET population in the city. Although our NEET figures improved steadily from 2005 to 2009, the percentage of NEETs has begun to rise again, following the national and regional trend. This is in line with the general message from the Education Bill that Local Authority attention should be targeted on post 16 young people who need support, rather than offering a programme of careers guidance to all.
- 3.14 Any proposals for a redesigned Connexions Employability Service for young people should also sit within the recently adopted *Supporting Families in Brighton & Hove* process. This new Family CAF process will help professionals to plan an integrated approach to support for a young person and their family.

4. RELEVANT BACKGROUND, CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS, AND CONSULTATION :

- 4.1 On 22 July, Brighton & Hove City Council made a decision to make a £500k in-year reduction to the Connexions budget as part of a range of savings that had to be undertaken. In order to achieve the required savings, a combination of measures was required including contract variation and decommissioning. As a result of this decision, 14 Brighton & Hove City Council Intensive PAs and 3 Senior Youth Workers were put at risk of redundancy and a consultation process was begun. At the same time, negotiations began with Prospects Services Ltd who held the biggest contract for the delivery of Information Advice and Guidance.
- 4.2 On 2nd August 2010, a reduction in remaining contract value was proposed to Prospects and negotiations began. Prospects replied on 17th September to confirm that they were not in a position to accept the proposals for a renegotiated contract. As a result, the Prospects contract was terminated on 31st October. Based on legal and HR advice, all Prospects staff were eligible for TUPE and became Brighton & Hove City Council employees on 1st November. Because of this, it was agreed to extend the Brighton & Hove City Council PA consultation process and align it with a similar process to incorporate those Connexions staff recently transferred from Prospects.

- 4.3 A revised consultation paper was issued on January 6th 2011. The revision incorporated changes that were a result of negotiations with Prospects Services Limited, (the former contract holder for Connexions IAG provision). Connexions staff previously employed by Prospects Services Ltd transferred into Brighton & Hove City Council on November 1st 2010 under TUPE legislation. As a result, this paper concerned those staff members as well as the BHCC employed staff included in the original paper. It outlined the proposals to achieve required savings from the Connexions budget for 2011/12 and the revised staffing implications of such budgetary reductions.
- 4.4 Consultation with Brighton & Hove City Council staff affected ended on 7 February. A summary of the main issues raised within the responses and which have informed this paper are included in Appendix 2. A complete set of the responses have been made available to members for their consideration. Members will wish to note the quality of some of the individual work done by current Connexions workers, as illustrated in the case studies and letters of support.
- 4.5 In brief, two collective responses have been received from staff, those who work as part of the in-house Connexions service and those who have recently formally transferred from Prospects: Consultation comments include questions about the limited structure proposed for the new service and queries about the proposed selection process, including the rationale for ringfenced selection and proposed slots to posts. Responses have also requested more detailed information on the new structure, the roles proposed and the timescale. Full responses to these issues and queries will be included in the formal response to consultation, which is due after 21st February.
- 4.6 The initial proposals for the redesigned service have been shared with the Head Teachers' Steering Group and the 14-19 Partnership Board. A letter detailing these proposals was sent to all secondary and special schools as well as the three colleges. This is attached as Appendix 3. The proposals have also been discussed in detail at the IAG subgroup of the 14-19 Partnership Board.

5. ORIGINAL PROPOSALS:

- 5.1 On January 6th a consultation paper was issued to all Connexions Personal Advisers and other affected staff outlining proposals to adopt a post-16 employability model of support to young people, focused on 16 – 18 year old NEETs and support to LDD young people. The model consulted upon can be found at Appendix 4. This proposed redesigned provision for Brighton & Hove comprised the following:
- 5.1.1 A team of 5 IAG qualified Personal Advisers (Employability) with special responsibility to support 16-18 year old NEETs. This would include careers guidance, CV writing, job search and job placement services.
- 5.1.2 A team of 2 specialist LDD PAs to provide support to young people with LDD/special needs.
- 5.1.3 The maintenance of one Connexions Plus access point to be staffed by the Personal Advisers (Employability).

- 5.1.4 Web-based, electronic IAG materials and other resources will be developed and maintained for post-16 young people.
- 5.2 In addition, the proposal was that IAG support to young people in education would be the responsibility of schools and colleges and there would be no Personal Adviser support provided directly to schools or colleges by the local authority.
- 5.3 This option proposed that the current team of 35.57 FTE posts employed by Brighton & Hove City Council (PAs, managers and other staff) would reduce to 7 FTE posts as follows:
- 5 x level 4 Personal Advisers (Employability)
 - 2 x level 4 Personal Advisers (LDD/SEN)
- 5.4 All reductions in staffing from the current position were accounted for by the anticipated change in support to be offered to schools and colleges for pre-16 young people and the corresponding reduction in management and support posts. An Employability team, working with post 16 NEET, and the team working with young people with special needs will remain in place.
- 5.5 In parallel with the option proposed above, other agencies within the city would continue to work with young people who have other, more specialist issues. These include Youth Offending Services (YOS), RUOK (substance misuse), TAPAS (mental health), YMCA (housing), health-funded teenage pregnancy workers and youth workers from the statutory and voluntary sector.

6. REVISED PROPOSALS:

- 6.1 As indicated the Connexions paper issued on January 6th allowed a period of 30 days for affected staff and others to comment on these proposals. The consultation period finished on 7th February. In addition to the two major responses were received from the Intensive PA team and the Careers Guidance PA team previously employed by Prospects, there have been other responses from schools, colleges and individuals. These responses have informed the recommendations in this paper and have allowed us to revise our proposed model to take account of some of the issues raised. Following the cabinet decision it is proposed that a formal response to these consultation response will be available by approximately February 21st as per the original consultation timetable.
- 6.2 Following careful consideration of the consultation responses received, we have revised our original proposals, and resources have been found to fund a new model (found at Appendix 5) as follows:
- 6.2.1 A team of 6.5 IAG qualified Personal Advisers (Employability) with special responsibility to support 16-18 year old NEETs and those looking for work and / or training. This would include careers guidance, CV writing, job search and job placement services.
- 6.2.2 Two level 3 qualified Client Advisers (Employability) with special responsibility to support 16-18 year old NEETs. These will work alongside the 6.5 Personal Advisers and be responsible for staffing a dedicated Connexions access point.

- 6.2.3 A team of four specialist LDD PAs to provide support to young people with LDD/special needs.
- 6.2.4 1.5 FTE posts to support schools to develop their capacity to enable them to carry out their statutory IAG duties and to achieve their responsibilities in terms of the IAG Quality Standards. This represents an increase of 0.5 of a post and reflects feedback from head teachers that assistance with the transition to the new duties is needed. The posts will be managed as part of the PSHEE team, within the schools skills and learning unit of the council.
- 6.2.5 IAG support to young people in education will be the responsibility of schools and colleges and there will be no Personal Adviser support provided directly to schools or colleges by the local authority. In addition, there will be no intensive Personal Adviser support provided by the community and voluntary sector.
- 6.2.6 Web-based, electronic IAG materials and other resources will be developed and maintained for young people. These will be accessible in schools, colleges, community locations or at home.
- 6.2.7 Arrangements will also be put in place to support the national requirements for management information returns, including intended destinations and September Guarantee.

- 6.3 In summary this option proposes that the Connexions current team of 35.57 FTE posts employed by Brighton & Hove City Council (PAs, managers and other staff) will reduce overall to 13.5 FTE posts as follows:
 - 6.5 x level 4 Personal Advisers (Employability)
 - 2 x level 3 Client Advisers (Employability)
 - 4 x level 4 Personal Advisers (LDD/SEN)
 - 1.5 x PSHEE Advisers working with schools

- 6.4 However the proposals should not be seen in isolation from the other services being offered across the Council. The Connexions Employability service sits within the tiered approach to Children and Young People's Services outlined in *Supporting Families in Brighton & Hove* and will utilise the Family CAF approach to assessment of need. *Supporting Families in Brighton & Hove* was launched on 23rd November 2010 and more than 150 delegates attending including many secondary and special schools. A presentation has also been made to SENCOs from a range of secondary and special schools in the city.

- 6.5 The process outlines the levels of need and common risk triggers for beginning a Family Common Assessment and introduces the continuum of need model within which the work of this employability service will sit. This can be found at See Appendix 6.

- 6.6 The Employability Team will offer a 'specialised' service, for NEETs and young people looking for work and training, developing links with the apprenticeship strategy within the Brighton & Hove City Employment and Skills Plan (CESP) and other agencies like Jobcentre Plus. The service sits within a city-wide framework of support for young people which includes the following providers:
 - Local Authority Youth Sector
 - Community and Voluntary Youth Sector
 - Youth Offending Services
 - 16 Plus Support Team & Young People's Asylum Service
 - RUOK?

- Social Work Teams
- Children's Centres
- Health
- Schools
- FE Sector

- 6.7 In addition to the framework for support described above, and the revised Connexions service described, support for young people will continue to be augmented by a range of many different support agencies in the city, many of which are in the Community and Voluntary Sector. A diagram showing how the Employability Service links to other support for young people is shown in Appendix 7.
- 6.8 Referrals to the Connexions Employability Service will be made via allocations meetings on a case by case basis. Young people can also self-refer via a dedicated access point or via a programme of outreach services offered in community settings. These will include youth centres, CVS locations, libraries and other council premises.
- 6.9 The LDD personal advisers will work predominantly with young people with statements of special educational needs. They will assist with Section 139A assessments and with specialist YPLA funding applications, ensuring the council is able to meet its ongoing statutory duties in this regard.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 As part of the Local Government finance settlement for 2011/12 the new Early Intervention Grant (EIG) was introduced. The new EIG replaces a number of former funding streams including Connexions. In 2011/12 the overall amount to be allocated nationally through EIG is 10.9% lower than the aggregated funding that makes up the notional baseline in 2010/11.
- 7.2 Following the 2010/11 in year reductions the Brighton and Hove Connexions budgets was £1.468m. The proposed Connexions budget in 2011/12 resulting from the service redesign is £0.992m. The £0.476k reduction in the Connexions budget is reflected in the overall savings package for Children's Services.

Finance Officer Consulted:

Louise Hoten

Date: 10/02/11

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 In reaching any decision regarding service redesign members will wish to consider the responses to the consultation, and the implications for equalities issues contained in the attached Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix 8 of the report. The proposed model does enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties as set out in the body of the report, and reflects anticipated changes in the law as contained in the Education Bill, also described in the body of the report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Natasha Watson

Date: 10/02/11

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (see Appendix 8). This has been amended and updated in light of responses received to the consultation document of 6th January.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 Sustainability is determined by Brighton & Hove City Council continuing to receive funding to provide the service.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.6 The proposals in this paper will fully support the prevention of crime and disorder as set out in the Children & Young People's Plan.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.7 Financial and legal risks are set out above

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 These proposals take account of key corporate and citywide proposals, specifically those set out in the Children & Young People's Plan.

8. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 8.1 A range of alternative options have been outlined in previous reports to Cabinet.

9. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Acceptance of the report recommendation will enable Brighton & Hove City Council to provide a Connexions service to young people which will allow us to achieve our statutory responsibilities while at the same time work within the context of reduced spending on children's services in general.
- 9.2 The proposed redesigned Connexions Employability Service will add value to the work done by schools and colleges by concentrating on getting young people into education, employment and training when they leave compulsory education. This is especially relevant within the context of the present government's recent announcement that they intend to introduce an all age careers service starting September 2011 to be fully functional by April 2012. Schools will be under a legal duty to secure independent, impartial careers guidance for their students, but will be free to decide how best to support young people to make good careers choices.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Glossary of Terms
2. Summary of main themes from consultation responses
3. Message to Schools and Colleges 7th January 2011
4. Connexions Consultation Paper (Abridged) 6th January 2011
5. Connexions Service Redesign Grid
6. Supporting Families in Brighton & Hove
7. Connexions Employability Service - diagram
8. Equalities Impact Assessment

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. Full consultation responses

Background Documents

None

