

57/06 - **HOWZTALK AND FAMILY MEDIATION SERVICE:** The Head of Housing submitted a written report on the role and funding of Arch Mediation's Howztalk and Family Mediation Service, which made both a major contribution to meeting one of the Council's key objectives in the prevention of homelessness and also the Department of Communities and Local Government's target that the number of people in temporary accommodation should be halved by 2010. In addition to acquainting Cabinet with the funding of the service during the current financial year, approval was also sought, in line with government expectation, for the service to become a core service of the Council and which was considered in tandem with a request for agreement in principle to a budgetary growth of £26,320 in order to fund this as a core service in 2007/08.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY):

That (1) Cabinet supports the principle of the post of Howztalk Project Worker becoming part of the Council's staff establishment, subject to approval of a growth bid in the 2007/08 budget setting process; and

(2) Cabinet supports the principle of the Howztalk and Family Mediation Service becoming a core service of the Council with annual funding of £26,320 from the general fund, subject to approval of a growth bid in the 2007/08 budget setting process.

Reason for making decision:

Existing funding for this service ends on 31 March 2007. Second homes funding was secured from North Yorkshire County Council via the Local Strategic Partnership for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2006. There is no prospect of further second homes monies for this project.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not to continue with the Howztalk and Family Mediation Service after 31 March 2007. The service has made a significant impact in the reduction of homelessness and has facilitated alternative solutions for accommodating young people faced with homelessness. The service now forms a key part of the Council's Homeless Prevention Strategy and is regarded as a core service.

(6.04 pm – 6.10 pm)

(D)