

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4295

Author:

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Department:

Growth and City Development

Contact:

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Subject:

Accommodation for Ex-Offenders funding 2021-22

Total Value:

£213,833 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

To accept the revenue grant funding award of £213,833 from Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and spend it in accordance with the profile outlined at Exempt Appendix A. By counter-signing the decision, the Corporate Director is approving the non-Executive decision to recruit to the role outlined at point 1.1. and create and recruit to the role outlined at point 1.2 of Exempt Appendix A - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Programme of Spend in accordance with delegation 16 of the table of delegations. To sign the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Memorandum of Understanding between Nottingham City Council and MHCLG. To delegate authority to the Housing Aid Service Manager to utilise the flexible funding based on the programme of spend outlined at points 2.1 to 2.4 of Exempt Appendix A - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Programme of Spend. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Growth and City Development to adjust the programme of spend in-line with changing needs but within the financial envelope.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

Government research suggests that over half of rough sleepers have been in prison. To address the link between homelessness and offending, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) launched a new Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFO) revenue funding programme totalling £13m in April 2021, with a defined criteria for delivery of Private Rented Access Schemes which specifically support ex-offenders.

Nottingham City Council was identified by MHCLG as being amongst the areas with the highest levels of need and invited to competitively bid for a share of the funding. At the time of submitting the application, there were an estimated 80 individuals at risk of rough sleeping in Nottingham (16 identified during the street count and a further 64 sheltered by the local authority in emergency accommodation).

Prevention of homelessness and sustainable rehousing into settled accommodation are fundamental to the Nottingham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Ensuring that individuals have accommodation available upon release from institutional settings is a key priority. Additionally, throughput within the system is crucial and it is important to seek opportunities to deliver move on housing options to free up spaces in emergency supported accommodation.

Nottingham City Council currently operates the Nottingham Private Rented Access Scheme (NPRAS), which is linked to statutory homelessness assessment and based at Housing Aid. The local authority submitted a bid to the AFO fund to deliver the expansion of NPRAS to provide a specialist pathway from prison to settled housing and to support tenancy sustainment. The proposal for the enhanced service includes dedicated officers to help identify and secure properties by negotiating tenancies and support packages with landlords. The service would also provide a link worker to ensure contact and communication across housing, criminal justice, DWP and community sectors to minimise risk of reoffending and maximise successful resettlement.

MHCLG have awarded Nottingham City Council £213,833 revenue funding to deliver the service detailed within our proposal (Exempt Appendix B), in line with requirements outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (Exempt Appendix C - Nottingham Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Memorandum of Understanding)

Other Options Considered:

To not bid for the funding. This option was rejected because tackling rough sleeping is a priority in Nottingham and we cannot achieve a reduction without additional resources targeted towards the issues. To bid for funding for a service to be provided by a third party on the council's behalf. This was rejected because Nottingham City Council already operates a successful private rented sector access scheme. Basing this specialist service within the existing scheme will negate the need for additional supporting infrastructure, targeting the grant towards service delivery and supporting more people. Additionally, basing the new service within an established scheme will accelerate service mobilisation and minimise risk of inability to meet targets. To accept the grant but target it towards an alternative use. This was rejected because the grant is ring-fenced for the specific use as outlined in the bid (Exempt Appendix B) and Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix C)

Background Papers:

None

Published Works:

None

Affected Wards:

Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests:

None

Any Information Exempt from publication:

Yes

Exempt Information:

Description of what is exempt:

Exempt Appendix A - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Programme of Spend
Exempt Appendix B - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Nottingham Proposal
Exempt Appendix C - Nottingham Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Memorandum of Understanding

An appendix (or appendices) to this decision is exempt from publication under the following paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because it includes detail on a flexible funding pot for landlords' incentives to be used at the local authorities discretion but if publicly known could affect the ability to negotiate tenancy conditions and jeopardise the delivery of the project.

Documents exempt from publication:

Exempt Appendix B - Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Nottingham Proposal.xlsx, Exempt Appendix C - Nottingham Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Memorandum of Understanding.docx

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

None

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: A recent EIA relating to rough sleeping services has been developed

Relates to staffing:

Yes

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:

Yes

Call In Expiry date:

03/08/2021

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Human Resources

Legal Advice:

There are no significant legal issues arising from this decision. The agreement from MHCLG has been reviewed by legal and subject to the Council being satisfied that it can meet any conditions set out in the document - including delivery of the project as bid for - then legal advice is that the document can be signed.

Advice should be sought from HR with regard to the funding of any internal post and, if appropriate, the creation of any new posts. Legal Services will provide support as required in this respect.

Advice provided by Naomi Vass (Senior Solicitor) on 22/07/2021.

Finance Advice:

The grant will be spent in accordance with the details set out in Appendix A. Appendix C is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the grant and within this there are a number of requirements that must be adhered to in order to fulfil the grant conditions. The grant will be received in instalments in August 2021 and November 2021 but payment is dependent on delivering the Governments outcomes and satisfying MHCLG as set out in part 2 of the MOU - Funding Composition and Payment Mechanism. The responsibility for this will sit with the Homelessness Strategy Manager, supported by Finance and the monthly information must be supplied to reduce the risk of not receiving the money. Expenditure associated with this grant must be coded separately to ensure clear monitoring can take place as set out in Part 3. Advice provided by Susan Tytherleigh (Senior Finance Manager) on 21/07/2021.

HR Advice:

Management need to ensure that the extended duties amendments to the NPRAS job description are correctly evaluated through Job Evaluation. Management will need to ensure that where additional roles are recruited, that this activity is conducted through the appropriate processes, including redeployment consideration. Management should be aware that any newly recruited post-holders should commence on a starting salary of Level One within the respective grade, unless the appointed colleague is already in employment at the Council and on Level 2 of the same grade, in which case the employee would be matched over at the rate of pay they currently receive. There will need to be a support and development plan for the new post-holder once appointed in line with managing performance.

Advice provided by Aadil Bhatti (HR Consultant) on 23/07/2021.

Signatures

Linda Woodings as Portfolio Holder (PH Housing, Planning and Heritage)

SIGNED and Dated: 26/07/2021

Michael Wayne Bexton (Interim CD for Growth & City Development)

SIGNED and Dated: 26/07/2021