

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4590

Author:

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Department:

People

Contact:

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Subject:

Nottingham City Prayer - 100 Homes - Grant Request for the period of three years

Total Value:

£45,000 to be paid over a three year period (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

To provide a grant to Nottingham City Prayer - 100 Homes of a fixed amount of £15,000 per annum for a period of three years, to work with Nottingham City's Fostering Recruitment Team to assist with recruiting foster carers to care for Nottingham City Children.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

In 2018 Nottingham City Fostering were approached by Nottingham City prayer to look at what they could offer as an organisation in helping looked after children. They soon established supporting the recruitment and support of new carers to Nottingham City and called the project 100 Homes campaign. This was a voluntary arrangement.

In 2020 Nottingham City Prayer asked for a contribution towards a worker helping with the recruitment activity and putting on recruitment events at various churches as well as supporting applicants through the process and post approval.

10K was agreed in 2020/2021 in the form of a grant. We wish to continue this for a further 3 years at the cost of 15k per year.

This grant request is supported internally Nottingham City had 699 children in their care as recorded on 30.9. 2021. These are the most vulnerable children in the City, some of them known to services for some time, and many with complex needs. The majority of these children (468) are placed with foster carers. The Department recognises that if children are unable to live safely with birth parents or their extended family, then a setting that offers the experience of family life is best. This is what a placement with a foster carer offers. Due to the increasing number of children coming into care, it is imperative that we recruit as many in house foster carers as possible. Currently we have 252 children placed internally and 216 children placed with IFA carers as of 30.9.2021. Nottingham City Prayer bring another element to our recruiting programme. They will present their own recruitment events, and they have access to another demographic of potential foster carers through the church network, and will assist and support Christian Carers through the recruitment process, and will continue their support once the carers have been approved through the Christian Community, with additional support supplied by Helen Fearn, who is already approved as a Nottingham City Carer

Other Options Considered:

If the funding grant is approved, Nottingham City Council Fostering recruitment will continue to work alongside the 100 Homes Campaign. 100 Homes have recruited 23 additional carers for us since 2018. If the funding is not approved we will not recruit as many carers as we will not have their support. If the recruitment of Foster Carers is reduced, and the retention of carers is not maintained Nottingham City Children will be placed with Independent Fostering Agencies. This will result in an increase in expenditure, as Independent Fostering Agencies charge in excess of £1,000 per week. compared to Internal Foster Carers which are £427 per week. It is also an Additional Safeguarding concern, as if we continue to place children in line with demand, Children will be at Risk, as they will be placed with Independent Foster Agency Carers, and we are unable to monitor the placement, and the care the child receives. It is also a negative effect on the child as they will have to move away from the Nottingham area. It is beneficial for Nottingham Children to be placed with Internal Carers, as it is more likely for them to access their local provisions and maintain their local connections, this makes their placement more stable and less likely to disrupt.

Background Papers:

Published Works:

Affected Wards:

Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests:

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

Not applicable for this request.

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: EIA not required. Reasons: Not applicable as this is not a new service or policy.

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:

Yes

Call In Expiry date:

11/04/2022

Advice Sought:

Legal, Finance, Procurement

Legal Advice:

This report seeks authority to support work undertaken by Nottingham City Prayer in providing foster carers in the City in accordance with the 100 Homes Project.

As detailed within the report, it is vital to children within the city that sufficient foster care places are available and the work that Nottingham City Prayer does is considered invaluable to this aim complementing the Council's own recruitment programme.

The Council is proposing to provide a grant to Nottingham City Prayer to financially assist their provision. Grants are not governed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and so there is no requirement for a procurement process to be undertaken. Appropriate grant agreement terms should however be put in place to reflect this arrangement and to enable the Council to monitor the use of the grant funding in line with its objectives in achieving more foster care places in the city. Advice provided by Dionne Claire Screatton (Solicitor) on 11/01/2022.

Finance Advice:

This decision seeks approval to make an annual contribution of £15,000 per year for 3 years to Nottingham City Prayer on the 100 Homes Campaign; this is £5,000 more per year than previously agreed. This funding would contribute towards an employee of Nottingham City Prayer who supports fostering recruitment activity and events at various churches, as well as supporting applicants through the process and post approval.

Since 2018 the 100 Homes Campaign has aided the recruitment of 23 additional carers for Nottingham City Council. The increase and sustainability in internal foster carers will ensure a more cost effective fostering model and reduce the reliance of using external provisions that are significantly higher. The service should monitor the number of additional carers recruited as a result of the campaign, to ensure it is still cost effective to provide the funding.

This contribution can be funded through existing budgets within the Fostering & Recruitment service.

Advice provided by Ruby Barton (Commercial Finance Business Partner) on 07/02/2022.

HR Advice:

Management should ensure that Fostering Recruitment team staff understand their responsibilities and duties in relation to their work with the organisation, and that this element of colleagues' roles is compatible with their job descriptions.

Advice provided by Joanne Zylinski (Service redesign consultant) on 11/11/2021.

Procurement Advice:

This decision proposes grant funding of Nottingham City Prayer - 100 Homes for a period of 3 years to assist Nottingham City's Fostering Recruitment Team with the recruitment and support of foster carers. This has been deemed to be a grant funding arrangement and therefore is not subject to the procedural requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and there are no procurement implications arising. An appropriate agreement should be established to reflect the award of funding. Advice provided by Jo Pettifor (Procurement Team Manager) on 10/01/2022.

Signatures

Cheryl Barnard (Portfolio Holder- Children and Young People)

SIGNED and Dated: 01/04/2022

Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)

SIGNED and Dated: 04/04/2022