

Commissioning and Procurement Executive Committee – 12 November 2024

Subject:	Home Office grant monies for the Asylum Dispersal Scheme		
Corporate Director:	Colin Parr – Communities, Environment and Residents Services		
Executive Member:	Councillor Coral Jenkins – Communities, Waste and Equalities		
Report author and contact details:	Beth Hanna, Migration Operations Manager Beth.hanna@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Susan Turner – Finance Del Sanders - Legal Jo Pettifor - Procurement		
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Subject to call-in
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Reasons:	<input type="checkbox"/> Expenditure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income	<input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £750,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Type of expenditure:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital		
Total value of the decision: £1,458,000			
Section 151 Officer expenditure approval			
Has the spend been approved by the Section 151 Officer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/a			
Spend Control Board approval reference number:			
Commissioner Consideration			
Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Any comments the Commissioners wish to provide are listed in section 6 below.			
Wards affected: All			
Date of consultation with Executive Member: 30/10/2024			
Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:			
Green, Clean and Connected Communities			<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working			<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028			<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in our Communities			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving			<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre			<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):			
<p>Nottingham City has been an Asylum Dispersal Area since 2002 and NCC were not allocated any government funding for this until 2021-2022 (received retrospectively in 2022). The asylum dispersal process provides accommodation and support via a Home Office-contracted provider (currently SERCO, previously G4S) while individual asylum claims are assessed.</p> <p>In 2022, participation in asylum dispersal became mandatory for all Local Authorities areas in England, Scotland and Wales to allow for movement from hotels to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation.</p>			

The following grants have been received and now require retrospective approval to accept. The government allocate this funding retrospectively:

Grant 4	£171,500
Grant 5	£12,000
Grant 6	£1,099,500
Grant 7	£175,000

The funding received so far has been used to support existing and current services for people seeking asylum and the allocation of this resource is key to service delivery within the Council and Voluntary Community Sector. The funding will support and help alleviate additional pressures placed on these services, which currently already have a high demand and limited capacity. The funding will be used to support the delivery of vital services to this vulnerable cohort and adequately help resource services who have been delivering and developing quality provision previously without this additional funding.

Exempt information: None

Recommendations:

- 1** To authorise acceptance and drawdown of relevant grant monies (in part retrospectively) from the Government Asylum Dispersal Fund between 2023-2028 (5 years).
- 2** To grant delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Resident Services to approve the outcome of any funding agreements and Voluntary Community Sector grant programmes set up to meet the needs of people seeking asylum line with NCC processes.
- 3** To approve delegation of spending authority to the Corporate Director for Resident Services on other required services within NCC and externally with the voluntary and Community sector and other services, subject to compliance with Home Office Funding Instructions and Nottingham City Council's constitutional requirements.
- 4** To grant delegation to the Corporate Director for Resident Services to extend staff contracts as required subject to available funding at the time, associated with this project to deliver, manage and develop the service and improve governance, contractual and compliance arrangements responding to need and changing trends.

1. Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The Secretary of State for the Home Office has agreed to provide the Council a grant as a contribution to supporting Asylum Seeker Dispersal. This funding is ringfenced but can be used by Local Authorities on how best they see fit to support Asylum Seekers and ease specific local pressures on already overstretched services. Payment will however be subject to the conditions of the grant agreement (i.e. see attached funding instructions).
- 1.2 It should be noted that Central Government funding instructions are frequently changing in parameters and time scales and are often issued after implementation has begun.
- 1.3 The Asylum Dispersal Fund contributes along with other Government funding (such as Refugee Resettlement and Homes for Ukraine Scheme) to the cost of staff within the Migration team, to deliver work around Asylum.

- 1.4 The Asylum Dispersal Fund is also funding 1.5 Asylum Coordinators in the Migration Team that are currently being recruited to. This additional funding will ensure the posts can be extended and work embedded to make significant progress without a cost to the Council. These posts will ensure improved partnership working, responding to gaps and risks to avoid the escalation of issues and impact on existing overstretched council and other services, ie, Health, Housing, Social Care, Education and Voluntary and Community services.
- 1.5 The Migration team have an action plan and budget for the allocation of funds to support Asylum Dispersal, to alleviate pressure on existing services and meet gaps in provision. With the funding currently received we have a 5 year plan that enables the Migration Team to plan ahead, improve governance for projects and sets out improved commissioning and grant aid processes rather than responding to crisis with each new policy announcement. This will be supported by establishing a Strategic Migration Partnership/board within this financial year.
- 1.6 The previous funding secured has enabled initiatives to support departments such as Public Health, Education and the Slavery Exploitation Team, to secure additional resources for this cohort, freeing up and adding capacity in the system. And this current funding will be able to support the continuation of these partnership arrangements.
- 1.7 The Asylum Dispersal fund is currently funding the 'Into the Mainstream' service through grant arrangements for 2024-2025 following the Communities of Identify grant funding ceasing from March 2024. This is currently delivered by NNRF (Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum). Public Health have now developed this service specification and are due to procure this 'access to healthcare services' with a further contribution from the Asylum Dispersal Fund to jointly fund this service delivery.
- 1.8 A small grants programme funded by these Government monies, was established in 2023 with a 2nd round due this winter for local voluntary organisations to improve integration and inclusion, educational opportunities, mental and physical health and wellbeing, reduce isolation, promote health relationships, provide safe spaces, empower and support the voices of people seeking asylum and offer support around crisis, hardship and poverty. This has enabled a range of wrap around support to improve the lives and integration of Individuals seeking asylum.

2. **Background (including outcomes of consultation)**

- 2.1 The Migration Team coordinates the Asylum and Refugee Resettlement Multi Agency Forum that includes statutory and voluntary specialist services to network, problem solve and share information and have been consulted with regarding the gaps and needs of individuals seeking asylum in the city to assist in the priorities for this funding. This is currently being analysed.
- 2.2 Forums and partnerships have been set up by the Migration Team in the last 2 years to focus on trends and risk, including 1) Safeguarding 2) Homelessness and 3) Anti Asylum narrative partnerships and are consulted on in regard to emerging issues, gaps in services, problem solving and priorities for funding.

2.3 The Migration team continues to collaborate with Public Health in relation to the JSNA for individuals seeking asylum that involved consultation with service providers and those with lived experience.

3. Other options considered in making recommendations

3.1 As this is a statutory requirement declining to participate in this funding scheme may result in capacity reduction or closure of key voluntary services, which would displace support needs back to Nottingham City Council, without additional resources. Being an Asylum Dispersal area is mandatory, so we would still be expected to support asylum seekers but without funding to do this.

4. Consideration of Risk

4.1 Without acceptance of the Government funding and approval to spend we would be breaching our statutory requirements, and this would mean we would have to fund this work internally.

5. Best Value Considerations

5.1 The Migration team have restructured the team to include the recruitment of 1.5 Asylum Coordinators to work with partners in the community and statutory sectors to address issues relating to people seeking asylum, identify gaps and develop provision through this funding to address needs and mitigate risks and pressures on services and escalation of issues.

5.2 Specialist partners have been consulted with about the best value use of this funding to identify the gaps and find solutions to meet the needs in a proactive collaborative approach.

5.3 We have now allocated a small grant programme to address needs and provide advice services, activities, and support to people seeking asylum to aid integration. This work reduces pressure on existing services. This will be a transparent and robust process with a panel to review and assess applications to ensure they meet set criteria to offer quality provision.

5.4 The Migration team are working with Public Health to address actions and solutions following the JSNA including jointly funding the procurement of the new 'healthcare access service' that is a continuation of the 'Into the Mainstream' grant funded service, to ensure continued healthcare support to some of the city's most vulnerable populations. This new service has been subject to a separate approval.

6. Commissioner comments

6.1 The Commissioners are content with this report. Attention is drawn to the specific grant conditions set out at para 7.3 and 7.4. (31/10/2024)

7. Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

7.1 This decision seeks approval to accept multiple Asylum Dispersal Scheme Grant Fundings from the Home Office for financial year 2023-24 and 2024-25 to date to a value of £1.458m.

	£m's	
Grant 4	(£0.172m)	2023-24
Grant 5	(£0.012m)	2023-24
Grant 6	(£1.100m)	2024-25 (Q1 and Q2)
Grant 7	(£0.175m)	2024-25
	(£1.458m)	

7.2 This funding covers financial year 2023-24 and 2024-25 funding to assist with the costs of supporting Asylum Seekers under Full Asylum Dispersal. All funding identified has been received - except for the Grant 6, Q2 (£0.093m) for which the Payment Allocation has been received with a payment expected to be made by 31st December 2024 as stated in the Funding Instructions key dates (within 90 days). Each quarterly payment will be based on the extant population on 01 April 2024 and the subsequent net growth between 01 April 2024 and the Payment Eligibility Date less the payments already made for the net growth in prior quarters.

Grant 4	Grant payments of £3,500 based on net growth per new and occupied bedspace opened between 1 st april 2023 and 31 st March 2024 inclusive.
Grant 5	4 month pilot scheme – no LA guidance provided
Grant 6	Grant payments of £750 per asylum seeker in Home Office Asylum Seeker accommodation as of 01 April 2024.
Grant 7	grant payment of £3,500 based on net growth per newly occupied bedspaces in eligible properties between 01 April 2024 and 30 June 2024 inclusive.

7.3 Expenditure needs to be in accordance with the grant conditions some of which are highlighted below, meeting the funding requirements and validation to avoid the risk of clawback whilst ensuring best value and effective use of this funding.

“The payment is to address concerns raised by Local Authorities in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting Asylum Seekers.”

“Funding provided must not be used for any purpose other than achieving delivery of the outcomes detailed in this Instruction, nor is it permissible to move/transfer any such funds elsewhere without prior written consent from the Authority”

“In all cases, to assist with monitoring and evaluation of the Schemes, the Recipient shall supply the Authority with all such financial information as is reasonably requested from time-to-time, on an open book basis.”

7.4 Also, the Service needs to ensure that all relevant reporting documentation is completed and stored appropriately by the operation to address any future information requests as required, as well as in year returns.

Susan Turner, Senior Commercial Business Partner - 18/10/2024

8. **Legal colleague comments**

- 8.1 Grant funding expenditure needs to be in accordance with the grant conditions, meeting the funding requirements and validation to avoid the risk of clawback whilst ensuring best value and effective use of this funding, whilst also ensuring all relevant reporting documentation is completed and stored appropriately by the Authority to address any future requests.
- 8.2 In issuing any grant funding or relevant financial assistance the Authority will need to be mindful to follow any relevant obligations placed on it under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Del Sanders, Solicitor - 17 October 2024

9. **Other relevant comments**

Procurement colleague comments

- 9.1 This decision relates to the receipt and use of grant monies from the Government Asylum Dispersal Fund for the period 2023-2028. It is understood that for the remaining funding period, this grant will be used to fund required services within NCC and externally through the voluntary and Community sector. It is understood that a programme of small grants for the Voluntary Community Sector was established in 2023 will be continued during the coming winter, to support activities to improve the integration and inclusion of people seeking asylum.
- 9.2 As the external funding is as grants, there are no procurement implications. However, all funding should be used in compliance with Home Office Funding Instructions and the Council's Constitution and Contract Procedure Rules at Article 18. Should any funding be awarded externally as contracts for services or supplies, the Procurement Team will advise and support to ensure compliance.

Jo Pettifor, Category Manager – 14 October 2024

10. **Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)**

- 10.1 As a vulnerable cohort, people seeking asylum are at risk of street homelessness, ASB, hate crime and exploitation etc. Early intervention around harm prevention is the Migration Teams first priority and we have for example funded (23-24) a Modern Day Slavery Caseworker in the SET (Slavery Exploitation Team) to work with this cohort around risk and safeguarding. Approval of this additional funding will ensure we can continue this work.
- 10.2 The Migration Team also work to deliver key messages around hate crime to challenge myths and stereotypes and build community cohesion, and ASB. Community partnerships work with Community Protection Intelligence Analysts to ensure that such matters are registered for consideration in the Tasking and Tensions Monitoring processes. In partnership with other Community Protection teams and Notts Police we provide extensive support with these matters.

11. **Social value considerations**

- 11.1 The effective use of this funding to provide improved integration and support for this cohort will deliver considerable social value. Community development -

the services and initiatives developed will improve resilience by encouraging this community to access appropriate services and peer support each other e.g., through health literacy. Volunteering opportunities will be supported that will allow for upskilling and improving employability. The services and projects developed in partnership will link with other agencies to support, empower and signpost this community with a range of needs such as mental health, housing and learning opportunities such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

12. Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)

12.1 N/A

13. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

13.1 A specific EIA is not required because it overlap impacts on Domestic Abuse, hate crime, issues impacting new communities and other priorities are currently managed within the Directorate.

14. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

14.1 A DPIA will be ongoing and due regard will be given to any implications identified.

15. Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)

15.1 A CIA is not required because the work is person centred and does not impact on CN28 plans. Additionally, SERCO procure properties on behalf of the government that house people seeking asylum.

16. List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

16.1 None

17. Published documents referred to in this report

The following documents are available on the Government Website:

17.1 Funding Instruction for Local Authorities: Asylum Dispersal Grant Financial Year 2023-2024 Scheme Reference: 395 Asylum & Protection Transformation Grant 4;

17.2 Funding Instruction for Local Authorities: Asylum Dispersal Grant Financial Year 2024-2025 Scheme Reference: 395 Full Dispersal Grants Team Grant 6;

17.3 Funding Instruction for Local Authorities: Asylum Dispersal Grant Financial Year 2024-2025 – Quarter 1 Scheme Reference: 395 Full Dispersal Grants Team Grant 7;