

COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – 11/06/19

Subject:	Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) – Grant Funding Extension		
Corporate Director(s)/ Director(s):	Andy Vaughan – Corporate Director, Commercial & Operations Andrew Errington – Director, Community Protection		
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Rebecca Langton – Portfolio Holder, Communities		
Report author and contact details:	Noel Oxford – Refugee Resettlement Project Officer Noel.oxford@nottinghamcity.gov.uk 07702816014		
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Subject to call-in
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
			<input type="checkbox"/> No
Reasons:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 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
Total value of the decision: £372,932.74			
Wards affected: Small numbers in multiple wards. Citywide contract to support 120 people in Nottingham.	Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s): 19/02/2019 – Cllr Toby Neal		
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:			
Strategic Regeneration and Development			<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools			<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services			<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer			<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport			<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture			<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration			<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):			
The VPRS is a managed migration scheme which provides casework and orientation support to resettled refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war to Nottingham and South-West Nottinghamshire.			
This programme (fully funded for the first year, tapering through years 2 to 5) enables Local Authorities to voluntarily play their part in delivering a central government objective of 20,000 refugees resettled nationwide by 2020.			
Each individual's participation in VPRS runs for five years; as such, the first families to arrive (December 2015) will exit the scheme in 2020, while the final families to arrive (November 2019) will exit in 2024. As such, the project is currently approaching the midway point of an almost ten-year lifespan.			
Since 2015, Community Cohesion & Safety (CC&S) has worked in partnership with a group of second-tier Nottinghamshire Local Authorities (Gedling, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Newark & Sherwood) to support their participation in resettlement. All four of these authorities are therefore participants in the same support and integration arrangements as Nottingham City Council.			
For funding purposes, Nottingham City Council acts as Accountable Body for this consortium; NCC plans and oversees arrivals and ongoing orientation projects in a programme-management capacity; and draws down and administers grant funding for these purposes on partners' behalf, retaining an 8% management fee.			

Local Authorities are required to provide bespoke support to families to build cultural integration, promote and improve access to universal services, develop English fluency, and overcome barriers to employment. The scheme is now in its fourth year, and final arrivals under this iteration of the scheme will take place in November 2019.

Originally set up in 2014 to resettle extremely small numbers of Syrian nationals, this programme was expanded in late 2015, responding to an emerging humanitarian crisis within an extremely tight timeframe. CC&S began work on implementation with very limited knowledge of how the programme would be rolled out, and what the actual needs of the cohort would be. CC&S worked with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF) to develop and deliver an entirely new resettlement casework service in around 8 weeks. This work was grant-funded as part of the existing 'Communities of Identity' grant programme for asylum seeker and refugee support.

After action-learning and constant review of SLAs and support arrangements, it is now a great deal clearer to CC&S what support the resettled cohort requires, and the approximate costs of this. This means the support service now needs to move to a commissioning decision to put these parameters on a contractual footing. However, we need to create time and space for this process to take place.

Portfolio Holder agreement has therefore been secured to amend and extend the current grant-aid SLA by up to 12 months, giving time for a Commissioning-led 'Make or Buy' review to take place.

This report therefore seeks to ensure that wider Council support is available for this extension, and to make the sub-committee aware of the project so that oversight will be held within this forum.

Exempt information:

State 'None' or complete the following.

None

Recommendation(s):

- 1** To roll forward the existing grant-funding arrangement, and amend the current SLA with NNRF, to meet the needs of resettled refugees for up to 12 months, at a maximum value of £372,932.74 for the financial year 2019-20.
- 2** To undertake a concurrent Commissioning-led 'Make or Buy' review, in consultation with all existing stakeholders, and supported by colleagues in the Community Cohesion & Safety Service. To be funded from Resettlement grant funds.

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Since September 2018, Community Cohesion & Safety has engaged in an array of consultation, learning and evaluation exercises with stakeholders at all levels of the service, in order to assess the effectiveness of delivery to date. These exercises combined with action learning have highlighted the gaps in the service as it currently exists, and have allowed us to agree a comprehensive specification for its redesign.
- 1.2 CC&S therefore needs to consider and establish the best means to consult on and implement this redesign, through a Commissioning-led 'Make or Buy'

review, and time to consider carefully all implications arising from the outcome of this (eg, TUPE, re-tendering, etc). Therefore, CC&S are requesting an extension of the current grant-aid agreement with NNRF by up to one (1) year, while these processes take place.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 In 2015, Nottingham City Council, Gedling and Broxtowe Borough Councils made a joint commitment to 'play their part' in delivering a central government objective to resettle 20,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees in the UK by 2020. CC&S has led on this project, and has accepted a management fee from partner Councils' grant funding to do so.
- 2.2 During 2016, the partnership expanded on this arrangement, to include Rushcliffe Borough, and Newark and Sherwood District Councils. As such, CC&S now supports resettlement across five Local Authority areas, and works closely with Nottinghamshire County Council to co-ordinate upper-tier services in these localities.
- 2.3 In the same period, the national resettlement scheme has likewise expanded to include individuals of other nationalities who have been displaced by the Syrian conflict. This introduces additional complexity, as the service now must empower integration for individuals of multiple cultural, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.
- 2.4 CC&S have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with NNRF to deliver casework services for the cohort, and have to date managed 16 intakes comprising 65 refugee families, with a further intake planned for June 2019. This work has evolved rapidly from a bare-bones casework and advice support package, set up for delivery in under eight weeks, into a full orientation and capacity-building service, covering the five funded years of resettlement, including employability support and ESOL.
- 2.5 To date the partnership has resettled 267 individuals against a combined pledge of 286, based on each local authority's per capita 'share' of 20,000, to achieve overall combined progress versus pledge of 93%
- 2.6 Three years since the first arrival, families are generally settling and integrating well. However, partnership stakeholders have identified a number of issues which have led us to reconsider approaches to empowering families' self-sufficiency within the scheme's lifetime. We have therefore been seeking continuous service improvement and evolving our SLA with NNRF over this period of time.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 N/A

4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

- 4.1 Comments provided by Michelle Pullen, Finance Manager, Community Protection

- 4.2 The scheme runs over five years, and is grant funded by the Department for International Development (DfID), via the Home Office. All first year costs are fully recoverable, with funding tapering down across years two to five.

Nottingham City Council retains an 8% fee from this grant for management of families under County authorities. For funding purposes, the partnership is treated as one entity, and funds are pooled across all families. This has created substantial economy of scale; this work will therefore attract, in total, approximately £6.6m in ring-fenced grant funding into the service by 2024.

- 4.3 CC&S's current SLA with NNRF is based on a notional 45 individuals arriving in a given calendar year, topping up if this threshold is exceeded. We are committed to funding NNRF casework until end FY18/19, at a tariff rate of £2,666.07 per head for year one, tapering down to £533.21 per head by year five.
- 4.4 The partnership has resettled 51 individuals during calendar year 2018. Together with the 178 individuals resettled in previous years, this represents a total casework spend for FY18/19 of £378,240.42, plus an extra top-up payment of £15,996.42 (this in consideration of six extra individuals arriving), for a total of £394,236.84.
- 4.5 This is set against £1.05m of total grant income for FY18/19.
- 4.6 NNRF has agreed in principle to a tariff of £2,399.46 for FY19/20, a 10% reduction over previous grants, in consideration of reduced casework capacity, due to vacancies requiring backfill. If the current SLA were to continue under the new tariff (based on a minimum 45 arrivals during calendar year 2019, plus support for those in years two to five), FY19/20 casework spend would total £344,139.18. Assuming 57 arrivals (and thus completion of all pledges), FY19/20 spend would total £372,932.74.
- 4.7 This is set against £1.02m of total grant income for FY19/20.
- 4.8 As the last families to arrive exit their first year in late 2020, income and expenditure should automatically begin to taper off in balance with each other.

5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND INCLUDING LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 Although it is understood that the service will be subject to a commissioning process in the next financial year it is permissible to continue to provide the financial support as grant funding in this financial year. That is on the basis the services are not being specifically commissioned for the City Council but are being provided by the recipient to refugees and the City Council is willing and offering to provide additional financial support.
- 5.2 Where the City Council provides financial support to an organisation through grant funding instead of undertaking a competitive procurement exercise it must ensure the funding is not unlawful state aid. The status of the recipient as a charity or is not for profit is not relevant for the purposes of determining whether the recipient has received unlawful state aid. There is a reasonable argument that funding for the resettlement of refugees in Nottingham is geographically specific to Nottingham, and it is unlikely that the provision of the funding would have any negative impact on cross-border investment or the establishment of the same sort

of services. On that basis it is not a trading activity that would adversely affect inter-state trade and is therefore not state aid. The Legal Team will assist the Refugee Resettlement project team with the preparation of the grant funding agreement.

Andrew James, Team Leader (Commercial, Employment and Education) 7th May 2019.

5.3 Procurement comments

The proposed extension of the existing grant funding arrangement with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum for up to one year will enable continuity of services while a commissioning-led review is undertaken and the outcomes implemented. As this is a grant funding arrangement, it does not present any procurement issues. The proposed commissioning review will consider the service requirements and options for future delivery (including 'Make or Buy') in order to secure best outcomes and value for money. Any procurement process required as a result of these decisions will be undertaken by the Procurement Team through a fair and open process, compliant with EU and UK regulations. In accordance with the Procurement Strategy 2018-23, the procurement process includes consideration of social value in order to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits to the City of contracts awarded.

Jo Pettifor, Category Manager - Strategy & People, 7th May 2019

5.4 Risk Management

As a vulnerable cohort, resettled refugees are at particular risk of ASB, Hate Crime, in particular in County areas and in less diverse areas of the City.

Early intervention in terms of harm prevention is the first priority, and work is done with each intake to ensure that key messages around Hate Crime and ASB are communicated; that this behaviour should not be tolerated and that it will be considered seriously by the relevant authorities.

We find that families are often reluctant to involve uniformed services directly, which is likely an impact of their flight and bureaucratic conditioning. However, a number of families across the cohort have been adversely affected by crime and disorder issues; they tend to raise informal reports to us directly, or via their caseworkers, which will be passed onto Police/ASB as appropriate. It is important to bear in mind that in some cases, these complaints may be a bargaining tactic aimed at securing a better resettlement offer. However, all such information is investigated on its *prima facie* merits.

We work with CP Intelligence analysts to ensure that these matters are registered for consideration in the tasking process. In partnership with Community Protection teams (ASB and CPOs in particular) and Nottinghamshire Police, we support families and individuals intensively with these matters. We provide trusted interpreters to accompany face to face interviews, and follow up with NCC/NPF colleagues to channel updates back to families.

We also seek support from within our service, in particular from the Hate Crime Project Officer, who has been able to initiate wider pieces of response and mitigation work in areas where issues are particularly prevalent. Likewise, our colleagues will feed issues back to us when these are picked up by other teams.

Assuming a successor resettlement scheme is established, then as numbers, and therefore visibility, of resettled refugees increase in the aggregate, it becomes likely that the risk to this group will increase, with an associated increase in incidents. This risk is set against a background of growing political and social tension, particularly around immigration.

We are monitoring these tensions carefully as we move through the current scheme's lifespan.

6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISIONS RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (STRATEGIC REGENERATION COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)

6.1 N/A

7 SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The VPRS was expanded in 2015 principally with the goal of providing vulnerable families a means to reach safety without needing to make hazardous sea crossings. Nottingham City Council has pledged to 'play its part' in responding to and alleviating a humanitarian crisis. In all cases, families resettled under VPRS are judged to be vulnerable or disadvantaged in some way. VPRS is therefore creating social value by providing a safe and legal route to safety for vulnerable families who may otherwise lack the resources or ability to independently flee from war.
- 7.2 VPRS is intended to provide resources for Local Authorities to build bespoke wrap-around support for these individuals and families, as well as to empower smooth orientation to UK culture and customs, with self-sufficiency as the ultimate goal. This means we have an opportunity to empower the resettled community to fast-track their economic and community development. We are already seeing refugees take up educational, vocational training, and employment opportunities. As these elements slot into place, the barriers to greater cultural integration begin to fall. Sustainable development of employment skills remains one of our critical priorities for a future casework package.
- 7.3 We have taken particular care to look for opportunities to empower resettled women, not only to raise awareness of the specific legal protection and rights which the UK offers, but also to promote and encourage greater equality and independence.
- 7.4 In addition, over 50% of the cohort are under the age of 18. Young people within the cohort are frequently able to adapt to UK culture much more swiftly than older generations. As such, in almost all cases, families view Nottingham as their permanent home, because their children are settled here and are making progress. In future, as the diaspora embeds itself more deeply into the fabric of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, we anticipate seeing resettled young people taking their places at the forefront of the next generation, seeking to fulfil their ambitions, enriching the overall cultural and economic life of the city and surrounding areas.
- 7.5 Finally, as the work has developed, we have shifted from predominantly social housing towards a greater proportion of private rented sector (PRS) stock. In the interim, in 2018, Nottingham City Council has introduced Selective Licensing of

private lets, with the intention of improving PRS housing in Nottingham. As such, by working with private landlords to create compliant, affordable and sustainable housing for resettled refugees in the PRS, we have contributed in a material way to this strategic objective.

8 REGARD TO THE NHS CONSTITUTION

8.1 N/A

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

9.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because these proposals contain no significant changes to policies or practices.

10 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN WRITING THIS REPORT (NOT INCLUDING PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS OR CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION)

10.1 N/A

11 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT

11.1 N/A