

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

3677

Author:

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Department:

Development and Growth

Contact:

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Subject:

Use of New Burdens Grant 2019/20

Total Value:

£165,584 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

- 1) To accept the Government Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens funding of £165,584 for use during 2019/20, to meet the costs associated with the additional duties contained within the Act.
- 2) To approve the spending of the grant on property transactions, staffing and IT resources according to the schedule outlined in the attached exempt Appendix A: 'Programme for use of Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens funding'.
- 3) To grant permission for the extension of the contract with Housing Jigsaw to provide IT software for a further year until 31 March 2020.
- 4) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Development and Growth to adjust the remit of spend between the listed measures as demand requires within the 2019/20 financial year.
- 5) For the Corporate Director of Development and Growth only to agree to the creation and recruitment to the additional Nottingham City Council post at point 2(b) in the attached Exempt Appendix A (the decision contains both executive aspects and non-executive aspects approved under delegation 16).

Reasons for the Decision(s)

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect from April 2018. The legislation significantly changes the way that local authorities are required to respond to homelessness and it introduces duties for local authorities to try to prevent homelessness from happening prior to assessing a household under a Housing Act Part VII duty (commonly known as a 'homeless application'). This means that all local authorities are required to provide services and support to a wider range of people and for longer periods of time. In acknowledgement of the additional capacity systems required to transition to the new regime, the Government released a New Burdens budget and allocated a set amount to each local authority area for spend in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The allocations were determined by Government according to statistical homelessness returns submitted by each council. The grant is ring-fenced for the use of the local housing authority to help meet the new statutory requirements.

Recent national research indicates that most areas in England have experienced an increase in homelessness presentations, caseloads and the use of temporary accommodation since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Councils are also experiencing further difficulties in facilitating access to longer-term housing for people who are at risk of homelessness because of the nationwide shortage of affordable housing and ongoing austerity measures affecting household income. Demand for support from Nottingham City Council from households threatened with homelessness is high. An average of 95 households present to the Council at risk of homelessness every week, assessments take almost three times as long as previously and there is an additional 90-minute interview with the household to develop the Personalised Housing Plan (a further requirement introduced by the new legislation). Each Housing Aid officer is carrying a caseload of around 75 homeless households and cases are held for longer (the previous maximum of 33 days has now changed to a minimum of 56 days). There are currently over 250 families in temporary accommodation in Nottingham and people are remaining in temporary accommodation for much longer due to challenges in securing suitable and affordable settled accommodation during the 8-week homelessness relief stage. The New Burdens funding is intended to help to address these challenges.

Other Options Considered:

There are no other feasible options available as the grant is ring-fenced for the use of the local housing authority to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act and without investment in staffing, IT resource and additional temporary accommodation to meet the increased demand, this would not be possible.

Background Papers:

None

Published Works:

Decision 3491 - Use of New Burdens Funding for Homelessness Provision
(<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4821>)

Affected Wards:

Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests:

None

Any Information Exempt from publication:

Yes

Exempt Information:

Description of what is exempt:

Appendix A: Programme for use of Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens funding 2019/20

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 relates to a service provided to Nottingham City Council by the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) Nottingham City Homes and is commercially sensitive.

Documents exempt from publication:

Appendix A. Programme for use of Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens funding 2019201.docx

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

None

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: There are no fundamental changes to a policy, service or function.

Social Value Considerations:

Not applicable

Any implications affecting IT:

Yes

Relates to staffing:

Yes

Decision Type:

Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In:	Yes
Call In Expiry date:	22/10/2019
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, IT
Legal Advice:	<p>This report does not raise any significant legal issues. The City Council must comply with the terms set out in the new funding grant conditions. The property transaction referred to in recommendation 2 should be documented with Nottingham City Homes, but is not subject to the requirement to issue a competitive tender. The contract extension referred to in recommendation 3 may be awarded as the value of the contract extension (together with the value for the previous 12-month term) is below the applicable financial procurement threshold.</p> <p>Advice provided by Andrew James (Team Leader Contracts and Commercial) on 16/09/2019.</p>
Finance Advice:	<p>The New Burdens Grant for 2019/20 has been received by Nottingham City Council and the exempt Appendix attached in the body of this decision details how the grant will be spent. This breakdown of spend will be monitored to ensure spend is in line with proposals and does not overspend as there is no additional funding and any change in spend purpose is approved by the Corporate Director of Development and Growth as outlined in the recommendations. The spend outlined is in accordance with the grant. There is not a risk of claw-back of the grant.</p> <p>Advice provided by Susan Tytherleigh (Senior Finance Manager) on 13/08/2019.</p>
Procurement Advice:	<p>The Procurement Team have been consulted on this decision to grant an extension for a further year until 31 March 2020 to Housing Jigsaw. The contract value is below the threshold for requiring dispensation from Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Financial Regulations. This extension will enable the provision of IT software with the current provider to continue, and therefore, this decision is supported from a procurement perspective.</p> <p>Advice provided by Julie Herrod (Procurement Officer) on 29/08/2019.</p>
IT Advice:	<p>The IT Service supports the proposals contained within this delegated decision. From an IT perspective, the proposal is to continue to use for a further years systems that are already in place and used to deliver services. That the service has proposed this suggests that the systems are fit for purpose and the cost and risk associated with the move from a current to a new system is avoided.</p> <p>Advice provided by Paul J. Burrows (IT Change, Projects & Strategy Manager) on 09/08/2019.</p>

HR Advice:

Management proposes to extend two fixed-term contracts. An appropriate exit strategy must be in place in order to terminate the contracts in line with Nottingham City Council guidance in the result that the posts cannot be made permanent at the end of the fixed-term period. Management will need to ensure appropriate timelines are in place to notify the affected employees and give appropriate notice and referral to Redeployment, through the Departmental Human Resources team, as appropriate. Where an employee has accrued more than 2 years' service, management should be aware of the right to a redundancy payment if the reason for dismissal is redundancy and budget accordingly. Management will need to contact the Employee Service Centre (ESC) to ensure that employees are advised of the decision to extend in writing.

Advice provided by Shilpa Arya (HR Consultant) on 12/09/2019.

Signatures

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

SIGNED and Dated: 14/10/2019

Chris Henning (Corporate Director for Development and Growth)

SIGNED and Dated: 02/10/2019