

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

3725

Author:

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Department:

Development and Growth

Contact:

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Subject:

Use of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant 2019/20

Total Value:

£626,502 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

To accept the 2019/20 Flexible Homeless Support Grant allocation of £592,258 + accrued top up from 2018/19 of £34,244 awarded to Nottingham City Council by the government and ring-fenced to prevent and respond to homelessness.

To spend the grant on the measures outlined in the schedule in Exempt Appendix A.

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 financial period (2019-20).

Reasons for the Decision(s) Recent national research has found that most councils in England report an increase in homelessness presentations, caseloads and use of temporary accommodation following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018. 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 and each Housing Aid officer is carrying a caseload of around 75 homeless households.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, length of stay in temporary accommodation has significantly increased - largely due to challenges in securing alternative accommodation options during the 56 day relief stage. There are currently over 250 families in temporary accommodation in Nottingham. A successful plan of targeted activity delivered a reduction in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) use from a 2017/18 high of 140 and a 2018/19 high of 101 down to zero by Christmas Eve 2018. However, there has been some further emergency use of B&B in 2019/20.

Therefore, the proposed use of this grant is to work upstream to help prevent people from losing their housing, respond to the temporary accommodation pressures and provide continued investment to help to suitably rehouse people as quickly as possible.

Other Options Considered: Spend the grant entirely on activity to prevent homelessness. This option was rejected as, whilst it would help to stem the flow of people requiring temporary accommodation and alternative settled housing, it would not help to respond to the current pressures. Spend the grant entirely on activity to support households who have already become homeless. This option was rejected as whilst it may deliver impact for the people who are already homeless and being supported by the local authority, it would do nothing to help prevent more people requiring support in the future and would leave no resource to respond to this ongoing demand.

Background Papers: None

Published Works: DD 2921 - Reducing the Use of Bed and Breakfast for Homeless Households
DD 3308 - Reducing the Use of Bed and Breakfast for Homeless Households
DD 3491 - Use of New Burdens Funding for Homelessness Provision

Affected Wards: Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests: None

Any Information Exempt from publication:

Yes

Dispensation from Financial Regulations:

Yes

Exempt Information:

Description of what is exempt:

Appendix A Programme of Spend for Flexible Homeless Support Grant 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 may compromise the Council's position in respect of ongoing contract negotiations.

Documents exempt from publication:

Appendix - Programme for use of Flexible Homeless Support Grant 2019-20.docx

Consultations:

Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications:

None

Equality:

EIA not required. Reasons: The decision has been subject to a related EIA in the last 2 years that properly considered the issues relevant to this report.

Social Value Considerations:

Additional support services must be delivered through the landlord providing the additional units of accommodation. The value is modest and the need urgent.

Relates to staffing:

Yes

Decision Type:	Portfolio Holder
Subject to Call In:	Yes
Call In Expiry date:	11/12/2019
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources
Legal Advice:	<p>This decision does not raise any significant legal issues. There are several areas of spend identified in the appendix. Paragraph 1 is internal spend on staff. Paragraph 2 is for spend which is significantly below the applicable financial procurement threshold requiring a competitive tender. Paragraph 3 describes accommodation based services which are arguably not covered by the procurement rules as they are property arrangements. Paragraph 4 is for a series of solutions. It is important that spend on these items is monitored and delegated financial authorities are made clear to staff. If there is recurring spend this may require consideration as to whether this should be procured but based on the description of the services this would appear unlikely.. Advice provided by Andrew James (Team Leader Contracts and Commercial) on 20/09/2019.</p>
Finance Advice:	<p>Nottingham City Council has received its 19/20 Flexible Homeless Support Grant allocation of £592,258 and in 2018/19 accrued top up from of £34,244 of additional grant awarded to Nottingham City Council by the government and ring-fenced to prevent and respond to homelessness.</p> <p>This grant will be spent in accordance with the Appendix attached and will be monitored monthly. The grant is not subject to clawback and the Council are not at risk if the spend is altered from the Appendix. The recommendations state that amendments to the spend can be authorized by the Corporate Director for Development and Growth. Advice provided by Susan Tytherleigh (Senior Finance Manager) on 21/09/2019.</p>
HR Advice:	<p>Management will need to ensure that recruitment is conducted through the appropriate processes, including redeployment consideration. Management should be aware that the selected post-holder 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. As the post is temporary, an appropriate exit strategy must be in place in order to terminate the contract in line with NCC guidance in the event that the post 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 employee and give appropriate notice. Advice provided by Aadil Bhatti (HR Consultant) on 24/11/2019. Advice provided by Aadil Bhatti (HR Consultant) on 25/11/2019.</p>
Procurement Advice:	<p>There are no significant procurement implications arising from this decision. The proposal to spend the Flexible Homeless Support Grant allocation on the measures as outlined are supported from a procurement perspective. There are appropriate contractual arrangements in place with the support providers. Advice provided by Julie Herrod (Procurement Officer) on 10/09/2019.</p>

Signatures

Linda Woodings as Portfolio Holder (PH Housing, Planning and Heritage)
SIGNED and Dated: 04/12/2019
Chris Henning (Corporate Director for Development and Growth)
SIGNED and Dated: 04/12/2019
Laura Pattman (Strategic Director of Finance) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations
SIGNED and Dated: 03/12/2019
Chief Finance Officer's Comments: