



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Beth Storm,
Strategic Lead, Asylum & Migration

Tel: 0114 474 1844

Report of: *Eugene Walker*

Report to: *Communities, Parks & Leisure Committee*

Date of Decision: *14th November 2022*

Subject: *Asylum Dispersal Grant*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1311				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

Purpose of Report:

The government have made provision for an [Asylum Dispersal Grant](#) to be paid to Local Authorities, along with additional funding to ‘recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support’ of local authorities accommodating asylum seekers.

The purpose of the report is to seek endorsement by the committee of the proposed allocation of funding from the grant to support development of capacity to promote strong city leadership, a stepping-stone towards growth within the VCFS and strategic work to ensure a good quality, consistent and effective response to those seeking asylum and refuge in the city.

Recommendations:

That the Communities, Parks & Leisure Committee:

1) Endorses the use of the Asylum Dispersal Grant and Asylum Dispersal funding to be utilised as detailed in this report, with the purpose of:

- Providing funding for the continuation of the current Communities Asylum & Migration team function to continue beyond March 2023.
- Supporting identified partners to provide strategically important, good quality services known to benefit those seeking asylum and sanctuary.
- Provide an Open Grant Pot for bids from a broad range of organisations working for the benefit of the asylum and refugee community.

2) Approves the Council acting as accountable body for this purpose.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Sonya Oates
		Legal: Nadine Wynter
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton
		Climate: N/A
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Eugene Walker
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Richard Williams
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Beth Storm	Job Title: Strategic Lead – Asylum & Migration

Date: 4th November 2022

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Nationally, there are significant, ongoing pressures on the asylum system, including an increasing backlog of undetermined applications and higher demand for accommodation due to the increase in the supported asylum population.

As the UK's first City of Sanctuary, Sheffield has participated in asylum dispersal for many years.

Participation in asylum dispersal has historically been optional for local authorities. Historic government policy has meant that asylum has been the 'poor relation' of refugee and resettlement pathways and government have not made reimbursement for costs associated with supporting dispersal arrangements.

In recognition of '*concerns raised... in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting asylum seekers*', the government have made provision for an [Asylum Dispersal Grant](#) to be paid to Local Authorities.

All Local Authorities in receipt of the funding have discretion regarding spend, providing the money is '*used to implement and/or bolster services*' for this cohort.

The funding will support redressing this inequity to enable Sheffield to begin to address systemic inequality between this group, and those who have sought refugee status and sanctuary via other routes of entry.

The paper, Asylum Dispersal Grant – October 2022 (Appendix A) outlines proposals for utilising this money for the benefit of those seeking sanctuary in the city.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 The recommendations support development of capacity to promote strong city leadership, and a stepping-stone towards growth within the VCFS for the benefit of those seeking sanctuary in the city.

We know from experience and extensive partnership working, that the success of the asylum cohort is ultimately, our success and in turn, their failure, our failure.

Sheffield have long made the case for government support in respect of asylum seekers due to demand on infrastructure, service provision and

host communities, as well on the VCFS wraparound provision.

The outcomes impact not only on the specific cohort, but also the wider city and its residents, including economic and social prosperity.

Asylum and the resulting migration, shapes and impacts on the identity and prosperity of our city. The effects are visible in all aspects of everyday life - in our geographical communities, our schools, places of worship, retail centres and on infrastructure such as housing, health & social care and policing.

This funding will be significant in our ability to work collaboratively, demonstrating clear direction and collective leadership, placing the foundations for an **integrated, prosperous, inclusive city**.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The VCFS, led by City of Sanctuary, VAS and SPRING have identified the value of SCC being positioned to occupy a space of strong city leadership, driving co-ordination and partnership working, as being significantly important to the sector, and pivotal in creating a successful, inclusive city.

Consultation and engagement with the sector and relevant stakeholders will be carried out including workshops with stakeholders and statutory partners to begin to design a future model for equitable provision for those seeking sanctuary in Sheffield, based on need and a model which can flex in accordance with demand and financial capacity.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no disproportionate equality of opportunity implications arising from this proposal.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The Asylum Dispersal Scheme Grant is funded by the Home Office. Key features and terms and conditions of the grant are highlighted below:

Funding will be made in respect of costs to the Authority in fulfilling its statutory duties with regard to the scheme.

The grant must not be used for any other purpose than as set out in the Funding Instruction. Funding must also not be moved elsewhere without permission from the Home Office.

Funding issues arising from an Asylum Seeker moving to another authority must be resolved by the recipient and the relevant local authority.

Any overpayments must be reported, including where the funding required is lower than expected. Overpayments will be clawed back, or further payments adjusted as appropriate. Clawback of funds will also occur in the event that the grant conditions have not been met.

Unauthorised expenditure that exceeds funding levels will not be reimbursed.

Final checks will be made after the grant support period to ensure that payments made accurately reflect the grant entitlement.

Site visits will be made to Local Authorities who have received £100,000 or above.

Procurement:

All public sector procurement is governed by UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs).

Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

The Project Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and the [Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients](#).

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 There is no formal grant agreement, the Home Office have issued a funding instruction to all applicable Local Authorities and the money will be paid directly to the Council.

The Council is receiving this grant from the Home Office under s.110 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and can accept this funding further to s.31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Please see 4.2 above which highlights the key terms and conditions of the funding provided.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 N/A

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Asylum Dispersal Grant will enable Sheffield to begin to address systemic inequality between asylum seekers and those who have sought refugee status and sanctuary via other routes of entry, including provision of wrap support for this vulnerable group. Given the clear benefit, other potential action e.g. to decline the funding, was rejected.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Given what we know about current numbers in the national, and local asylum estate, retention of refugees in the city and the importance of developing support for refugees to achieve socio-economic success, it is vital that we look beyond short-term demand regarding placement and care of asylum seekers in the city.

This funding is an opportunity to think not only operationally, but strategically to maximise impact for the city in the longer term.

This funding will be significant to enable systemic change and an important step in placing the foundations for an **integrated, prosperous, inclusive city**.

The recommendation will support development of capacity to promote strong city leadership, a stepping-stone towards growth within the VCFS and strategic work to ensure a good quality, consistent and effective response to those seeking asylum and refuge in the city.

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