

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

11 July 2023

Community Support for Asylum Seekers

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.2 That Cabinet approves delegated authority to allocate grant funding for dispersal of asylum seekers, in line with 4.1 and 4.2 below, to the Divisional Manager for Communities and Customer Services following consultation with the Cabinet member for Communities.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Government have a policy of dispersal of asylum seekers away from large clustered hotels into dispersed accommodation across the country. This is to achieve a more equitable spread of the impact on housing markets and local services as the previous use of hotels put an unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities. All local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales are expected to participate in the dispersal scheme, although Chichester was a voluntary participant before the scheme became mandatory.
- 3.2 The Council's role in the placing of asylum seekers is limited as accommodation in the private rented sector is directly sourced by the governments contractors. The lead authority for vulnerable people is WSCC although some direct support is supplied by the Home Office delivered by Migrant help and Clearspring Ready Homes.
- 3.3 The government do, however, recognise the impact on local services and the role of local Councils in integration and support of local communities. To reflect this a payment of £3,500 per new bedspace and an annual sum of £750 per person at 1st April is paid to the Council. These payments have varied over the last few years, however, currently the budget contains £44k.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

4.1 Voluntary organisations are already working with refugees and asylum seekers in the district and the dispersal scheme will see numbers increase which will have a significant impact on demand for their services. It is intended to use part of the funding to provide integration and support through these local voluntary groups. Asylum seekers will have timely access to a variety of support and services to help them settle into a new community and way of life which may be very different from the one they left behind.

4.2 The funding can also be used to mitigate the impacts on the local housing market.

5. Proposal

5.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve delegation of the allocation of existing and future funds received in this regard to the Divisional Manager Communities and Customer Services following consultation with the Cabinet member for Communities.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

6.1 The funding is ring fenced for this purpose and the Divisional Manager for Communities and Customer Services will consider alternative providers of community services.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

7.1 Any staff resources needed to progress this proposal will be provided within existing resources.

8. Consultation

8.1 Key voluntary sector organisations have been consulted on what resource would be necessary to support this influx of asylum seekers. The Divisional Manager for Communities and Customer Services will consult with the Divisional Manager for Housing, Revenues & Benefits regarding any mitigation of housing impacts of the scheme.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

9.1 By allocating this funding it is hoped those asylum seekers coming into Chichester district are supported to integrate quickly and sensitively so they feel welcomed, less isolated and to avoid any potential community tensions from developing.

10. Other implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder:	x	

Good early community integration can prevent any community tensions developing which may lead to unsettled communities and potential crime and disorder.		
Climate Change and Biodiversity:		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact: Positive impact in supporting vulnerable people.	X	
Safeguarding and Early Help: Positive impact in identification and referral of issues if identified.	X	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):		X
Health and Wellbeing Access to support and good community integration will be of significant wellbeing benefit to those refugees who have fled their home country to live in the district.	X	

11. Appendices

None

12. Background Papers

None