

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	25 APRIL 2024	8

ASYLUM DISPERSAL GRANT FUNDING

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Lead Member for Social Wellbeing, Councillor Chris Dixon

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Since July 2022 Fylde Council have been receiving Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant (ASDG) from the Home Office, intended to address concerns raised by Local Authorities in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting Asylum Seekers with settled status leaving National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation within their areas. Fylde Council currently have £67,000 Asylum Seeker Dispersal Funding received throughout 2023/24.

Fylde Council previously funded a worker employed by Progress Housing to deliver support to clients in ten temporary units managed by Progress Housing Association in partnership with the Local Authority. This service was ended in April 2023, following increased costs of the project and the increasing need to widen the client group to support all clients to whom the Local Authority hold a homeless duty, outside of Fylde. The budget available from this project is £24,000.

Fylde Council Housing Service have been successful during 23/24 to secure additional units of Temporary Accommodation to support households facing homelessness within Fylde. The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF2) has been accessed to provide 9 units of additional temporary accommodation and 5 units under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Fylde Coast YMCA have repurposed a supported unit in Fylde to provide 13 single units of homeless accommodation.

As a result of the increase in temporary units of accommodation in Fylde there is a need to re-introduce the Floating Support Service to assist clients to move on into permanent accommodation with the employment of a Full Time Moving On Tenancy Support Officer.

The purpose of this report is to request grant funding available from the ASDG, totalling £67,000, be used to support the employment of the Moving On Tenancy Support Officer, for a three year period, by addressing the shortfall of funding required for a full-time position. The position will provide support for Asylum Seekers with Settled status, who approach the local authority under homelessness legislation on leaving NASS accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION

Executive Committee are requested to approve:

1. An ongoing Virement from 2024/25 onwards from the New Fylde Housing Floating Support Budget of £24,000 into the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Budget, to support the staffing costs of a Full Time Moving On Tenancy Support Officer within the Moving On Service; and
2. That funding held by the Local Authority under the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant (ASDG), totalling £67,000, be used to support the employment of a Full Time Moving On Tenancy Support Officer within the Moving On Service, for a three year period. The position will be reviewed and possibly continued beyond the three years, depending on the level of funding received from the ASDG within the next three years.

ASYLUM SEEKER DISPERSAL GRANT (ASDG)

1. The Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant (ASDG) is a scheme that provides financial support to local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales to house people seeking asylum. The grant is intended to address concerns raised by Local Authorities in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting Asylum Seekers with settled status leaving National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation within their areas.
2. Different grants are paid at different times of the year and it is not possible to predict with financial certainty the funding the Local Authority will receive for new and occupied bed spaces in NASS accommodation within the financial year.
3. Between March 2022 – March 2023 Local Authorities received £3,500 per new and occupied bed space opened in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation.
4. In 2022/23 the scheme provided £250 per person seeking asylum placed within NASS accommodation within an authority.
5. In 2022/23 Fylde Council received £13,750 in July 2022. This was related to a one off payment of 55 Asylum Seekers placed in the local Authority as at the 1st April 2022. This funding was placed within the B&B budget.
6. In 2023/24 the amount per asylum seeker housed within a local authority increased to £750 per person. In June 2023 we received £39,000 which was related to a one off payment of 52 Asylum Seekers placed in the district on the 1st April 2023.
7. Further payments throughout 23/24 relate to newly occupied bedspaces. Under the current funding arrangements a Local Authority will receive £3,500 per newly occupied bedspace, above the baseline figure from the 1st April 2023.
8. In 2023/24 we have received two payment of £17,500 in November 2023 and £10,500 in March 2024. These payments related to an increase of 5 and 3 people respectively.
9. The next data upon which funding is decided will be at the end of March 2024.
10. The funding is not ringfenced and can be carried forward within the next financial year.
11. DLUHC have advised:
“The Recipient shall be free to determine how best to utilise the Funding but for monitoring and Schemes’ evaluation purposes must be able to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the eligibility conditions in supporting Asylum Seeker Dispersal”
12. There is currently £67,000 Asylum Seeker Dispersal Funding. There is an expectation that further funding is to be received which will be focussed on priorities within the Housing Service Budget.

SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS WITH SETTLED STATUS

13. On receiving a notice to leave NASS accommodation Fylde Council will accept a Homeless Prevention Duty towards an Asylum Seeker with settled status, on production of Right to Remain in the UK documentation.
14. On leaving NASS accommodation Fylde Council accept a Homeless Relief Duty. The Local Authority has adopted an approach of offering five nights No Second Night Out as clients will be new to rough sleeping. This gives the

local authority an opportunity to establish if clients are in priority need and if therefore a duty to provide Temporary accommodation is owed.

15. This period also gives Asylum Seekers with settled status, not in a priority need category, time to either source sofa surfing options with friends, clarify the situation with benefits and be provided with advice on the housing options available to them.
16. To date in 23/24 we have provided 60 nights NSNO to this cohort. In some scenarios we have extended the NSNO provision, for example where clients have sourced accommodation or we require further evidence to determine priority need.
17. In 2022/23 the service had a total of 5 clients leaving NASS accommodation and in 2023/24 this has risen to 7 clients. Clients have been provided with Aldi Food vouchers, advice to source accommodation or provided with travel warrants to a chosen destination in the UK where they have connections either family, friends or employment opportunities. We have accepted a Main Housing Duty towards three households who have been granted Settled Status in the UK on leaving NASS accommodation.

MOVING ON SERVICE

18. In October 2022 Full Council approved the placing of Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) into the Housing Services base budget in order to respond to new reporting financial data requirements under homeless prevention, relief and main duty support from April 2023, as a result of the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
19. In response the Housing Service established a separate service within the Homelessness and Housing Advice function, Moving On Service, from April 2023. This service focusses on support for clients to move on from temporary accommodation, by providing a dedicated service to source move on options in the private and social rented sector, accessing funding to set the tenancy up with rent bond, rent in advance and household items and ensuring the appropriate social services support is in place.
20. The service has been instrumental in applying for funding to increase the supply of temporary homeless accommodation in Fylde via the LAHF2 and negotiating with the YMCA for repurposing accommodation as temporary homeless accommodation.
21. The additional temporary accommodation sourced in 2023/24 will increase the supply of temporary accommodation managed by Registered Providers in Fylde from 10 units provided by Progress Housing to 31 units; 13 units provided by the YMCA and, 8 units with an additional unit expected to come on board in June 24 totalling 32 units, provided by Humankind under LAHF2.
22. The additional provision of temporary accommodation in Fylde will reduce the reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation and reduce the costs of providing temporary accommodation this way. Customers are required to sign a license with the Landlord and responsible for paying the rent direct to the Landlord either through housing benefit or from earned income.
23. The costs of Bed and Breakfast accommodation used by Fylde Council to provide temporary accommodation have increased significantly over the last few years due to the number of households approaching the local authority to whom there is a duty to provide interim accommodation. The Housing Service has negotiated competitive rates with the majority of B&B owners we work with on a regular basis.
24. Clients in receipt of Housing Benefit are entitled to £91.15 per week for single clients and from £114 for clients with children. The actual cost of B&B accommodation varies depending on household size from £210 to £420 per week and for larger families can be as much as £560 per week. Clients in employment are invoiced at the same level, as if they were in receipt of Housing Benefit.
25. The Moving On Tenancy Support Officer role is instrumental in supporting clients to actively source permanent accommodation within either the private or social rented sector. The role assists customers with complex needs to access the required funding and support to manage their tenancies. Support is focussed on customers with a history of:
 - a. Repeat homelessness/failed tenancies
 - b. Families with dependent children
 - c. History of domestic abuse

- d. Diagnosed mental ill health
 - e. Chronic health conditions
 - f. Involvement with the criminal justice system
 - g. Substance misuse
 - h. Leaving supported and NASS accommodation
26. The Moving On Service will be required to adapt to a number of existing challenges and new opportunities in 24/25 and beyond;
- a. The Moving On Service at the time of writing this report is supporting 51 households in temporary accommodation. This figure includes 19 families with 38 children.
 - b. Under the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003 it is unlawful for local authorities to place families with children in accommodation considered to be B&B for over 6 weeks. Three of these families have been in B&B accommodation for over 6 weeks, out of area.
 - c. Increased support required for Refugees leaving NASS accommodation and approaching the local authority under homelessness legislation.
 - d. Increased support required from households, including families placed in temporary accommodation to whom a full homelessness duty placed within Fylde. This support will be focussed on moving clients on, to ensure the supply is available when needed.
 - e. A requirement for increased support and co-ordination of additional homeless temporary self-contained units provided in Fylde from 1st April 2024 under the LAHF2 and units provided by Fylde Coast YMCA.

Conclusion

27. The Housing Service currently hold a budget for Floating support of £24,000. This funded a worker employed by Progress Housing to deliver support to clients in the ten temporary units they provide in Fylde. This service was ended in April 2023, following increased costs of the project and the increasing need to widen the client group to support all clients to whom the Local Authority hold a homeless duty outside of Fylde. In addition the Moving On service had been established to address this need.
28. As a result of the increase in temporary units of accommodation in Fylde there is a need to re-introduce the Floating Support Service to assist clients to move on into permanent accommodation with the employment of a Full Time Moving On Tenancy Support Officer.
29. The purpose of this report is to request grant funding available from the ASDG held by Fylde Council, totalling £67,000, be used to support the employment of the Moving On Tenancy Support Officer, for a three year period, by addressing the shortfall of funding required for a full-time position. The position will provide support for Asylum Seekers with Settled status, who approach the local authority under homelessness legislation on leaving NASS accommodation.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	√
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

IMPLICATIONS

Finance	This report requests that current funding held by the Local Authority under ASDG, totalling £67,000, be used to support the employment of a full time Moving On tenancy Support Officer; and that an ongoing Virement from 2024/25 onwards from the New Fylde Housing Floating Support Budget of £24,000 into the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Budget be approved, to support the staffing costs of a Full Time Moving On Tenancy Support Officer within the Moving On Service.
Legal	No legal implications
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant (ASDG) from the Home Office, to address concerns in relation to pressure on local services associated with supporting Asylum Seekers with settled status leaving National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation within their areas.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

<p><u>CMIS > Meetings Calendar</u> - Council 12th October 2022 Preparing for changes to DLUHC Homeless Prevention Grant Funding reporting requirements and future funding to be placed within the Housing Services base budget to demonstrate spend on homeless prevention, relief and main duty support.</p> <p><u>CMIS > Meetings Calendar</u> Executive Committee 05/12/2023 <u>CMIS > Meetings Calendar</u> Council 18th December 18/12/2023 LAHF Phase 2 and S106 funding to provide 8 additional units of temporary accommodation to support homelessness pressures in the borough and 4 units of accommodation provided under the Afghan Resettlement Programmes.</p>

BACKGROUND PAPERS RELEVANT TO THIS ITEM

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Asylum Dispersal Grants – Information for Local Authorities	March 2022	Asylum Dispersal Grants- information for Local Authorities – North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (northwestrsmp.org.uk)

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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