

Thursday, 23 January 2025

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Cooperative Council, Community Partnerships and ASB

Tamworth Asylum Dispersal Funding

Exempt Information

N/A

Purpose

To outline Asylum Dispersal Funding proposals and seek delegated authority for grant spend.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve delegation of ongoing spend of the Government Asylum Dispersal fund to the Portfolio Holder for Cooperative Council, Community Partnerships and ASB and Executive Director Communities in accordance with Home Office guidance
2. Approve process for emergency operational grant funding delegated to the Assistant Director Partnerships
3. Endorse the current approach to the ongoing spend of the Asylum Dispersal Fund with annual update to the Infrastructure Safety and Growth Committee.

Executive Summary

The asylum dispersal scheme aims to distribute asylum seekers across various regions to ensure no single area is overburdened.

This report outlines the funding mechanisms, allocations for Tamworth Borough Council, and details of previous spend of 2023/24 grant and outline plan for spend of 2024/25 funds to support the council in managing asylum dispersal. The proposal is that this spend is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Cooperative Council, Community Partnerships and ASB and Executive Director Communities, which plays a crucial role in supporting the council to manage the distribution of asylum seekers effectively. Continued collaboration and strategic allocation of funds are essential to address the challenges and ensure the success of the asylum dispersal scheme.

Authorisation for delegated authority provides a more streamlined approach to grant expenditure.

It is further proposed that an annual report on spend will be provided as part of Community Safety Partnership reports on Community Cohesion priorities to the Infrastructure Safety and Growth Scrutiny

Funding Mechanisms

The Asylum Dispersal Grant supports local authorities through payments based on the number of asylum seekers accommodated. The funding is designed to alleviate the pressure on local services and support community cohesion initiatives.

Grant Allocations

For the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Asylum Dispersal Grant has included several key components:

£750 per asylum seeker in Home Office Asylum Seeker contingency accommodation as of 01 April 2023 and 01 April 2024.

£3,500 one-off payment per bedspace in dispersed accommodation.

Accommodation Type	2023/24	2024/25
Contingency Accommodation	£107,250	£182,000
Dispersed Accommodation	£0.00	£21,000

Emergency grant funding

Working with the Home Office and Serco there has been an increased need for emergency clothing for the people seeking asylum, many of whom have no suitable clothing or footwear. The generosity of the community working through key community organisations such as St Editha Church, Heart of Tamworth and CT CIC has enabled clothing donations, however several of the charities have used their own funding to buy clothes. It is proposed, therefore that an immediate grant of up to £500 can be made for emergency use on simple application and proof of purchase by a voluntary group up to a maximum of £2000 per year from the Asylum Dispersal Fund.

2023/24 Spend

The funding was retained to 31st March 2025 and includes the following expenditure (agreed through Scheme of Delegation reports):

ACTIVITY	£ COST
Support for an Asylum Dispersal Activities Coordinator (CT CIC) – liaison with service users, signposting, providing activity information, arranging and developing positive activities	22,265.00
Positive activities (CT CIC) including volunteering, sports, castle activities and food community events	4,415.00
Chamber of Commerce business awareness and support	18,150.00
Support for council homelessness team to provide housing advice and move on advice	53,276.33
Translation services	947.85
Hire of 3G football pitches	500.00
Empty homes officer – identification of suitable properties for asylum dispersal (private rent)	7,695.82

Proposed 2024/25 Spend Plans *

This below does not represent full expenditure, and any unspent money will be retained as per government guidance and until such times as projects are finalised.

ACTIVITY	£ COST
Ongoing costs for an Activities Coordinator (CT CIC)	22,265.00
One year extension Partnership team post	22,190.00 (approx.)
Emergency grants process (urgent clothing etc)	2,000.00
Support for council homelessness team to provide housing advice and move on advice	53,276.33
Translation services	947.85
Hire of 3G football pitches	500.00
Further work for Empty homes – identification of suitable properties for asylum dispersal (private rent)	2,672.00 to 31 st December

**Please note this is to be costed and delegated authority given as per report recommendations*

A meeting of community group stakeholder has been planned for January 2025 to consider options for further spend. It likely that some funding will be retained to support additional homelessness support.

Options Considered

Do nothing – the council do not have to utilise the grants received but in doing so fail in the obligation to support asylum dispersal as outlined in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, with a Full Dispersal model introduced for all local authorities on 13 April 2022

Other options – consideration made to outsource funding for third party administration or direct award for projects/ongoing TBC internal housing need. This will be considered in 2024/25 in line with Recovery Fund spend and projects planned and update to the Portfolio Holder/Executive Director.

Resource Implications

Administration of expenditure, community cohesion work, grants agreements and monitoring is done through the existing partnership team within current budgetary provision.

Specialist work identified to support asylum seekers which may need additional external support will be considered and funded from dispersal grant providing this meets grant criteria.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

Risk	Mitigation
Community Tension	Grant provides opportunity to support asylum seekers to integrate and can be utilised with community recovery fund money to tackle community issues Regular community safety meetings
Lack of move on dispersed accommodation	The council will continue to work with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and the Home Office to further inform and tackle emerging issues
Increased pressure on homelessness services	Contingency accommodation and dispersed accommodation occupancy is monitored and work ongoing with SERCO to understand numbers who may require support on a weekly basis
Misinformation	Communication plan to be drawn up and actions linked to those of the Honest Conversations project

Equalities Implications

The primary requirement of the grant funding is for the support of asylum seekers, community cohesion and to assist the council with pressures as a result of the Full Dispersal Model.

Community Impact Assessment attached (Appendix 1)

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

Not applicable to this report.

Background Information

Asylum Dispersal Accommodation Types

Contingency accommodation - housing that can be full-board, half-board, or self-catering. It is usually in a hostel-type environment or can be a hotel. It is for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute and need accommodation urgently before their Section 95 support applications have been determined. It is also provided to asylum seekers who have been granted Section 95 support whilst they await to be dispersed to longer-term temporary accommodation (i.e. dispersal accommodation). Asylum seekers who have been granted Section 95 support may remain in initial accommodation until there is space in dispersal accommodation. The amount of time people stay in initial accommodation can vary before moving onto dispersal accommodation.

Dispersal Accommodation - longer-term temporary accommodation managed by accommodation providers on behalf of the Home Office. People seeking accommodation will normally be able to stay in dispersal accommodation until their asylum claim has been fully determined. It is not always possible to stay in the same property.

Moving on - When an asylum claim (including any appeals) has been fully determined clients will need to leave asylum accommodation and Home Office support will stop. If asylum seekers are granted leave to remain, they will be eligible to work, claim mainstream benefits, look for housing and get help with this in the same ways as other UK residents. However, if claims are unsuccessful, clients will be expected to leave the UK.

Full asylum model – Home office approach to a fairer allocation of asylum seekers across all English, Scottish and Welsh Council areas in grant funded accommodation managed through regional Strategic Migration Partnership

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

[Funding Instruction for Local Authorities: Asylum Dispersal Grant](#)

Appendices

Community Impact Assessment

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