

RECORD OF INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE DECISION MADE BY AN OFFICER

Decision Maker	Decision Type	Date
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive – People and Place	Administrative Decision	25.01.2019.

Establishment of two Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer (LAASLO) posts

Exempt/Confidential Report	No	
Key Decision ¹	No	

Decision (s) ²

The decision is to accept the funding awarded and approve the establishment of two new fixed-term posts.

Reasons for the decision(s) ³

Oldham Council has been awarded funding (as part of a Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) bid) from the Government's Controlling Migration Fund to recruit two Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLOs) for two years. This report seeks approval to create these posts.

¹ If the decision is Key Please use Key Decision Template.

² Brief details of the decision should be inserted. This note must set out the substance of the decision, options considered and the reason for deciding on the chosen option, although care must be taken not to disclose any confidential or exempt information. Please include proposed timescales for commencement and / or completion of implementation as appropriate.

³ Reasons for the decision must be given.

Options/Alternatives considered ⁴

Option a. Do not participate in the scheme.

Funding has already been awarded to GMCA in respect of LAASLO posts working across GM, including within the Oldham area. Declining the offer to participate in this scheme would mean that the council does not utilise additional resources available to provide support to residents in the Oldham area.

Option b. Participate in the scheme with two FTE fixed-term posts

Participation in the scheme would secure funding not otherwise available to the local authority to undertake work supporting asylum seekers and refugees. It is anticipated that this would reduce pressure on other services and support integration into existing communities.

It is recommended to approve Option b.

Conflict of Interest declared⁵

None.

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(Signature of Executive Director/Director)

Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive – People and Place

Decision made pursuant to:

- a) General delegation under the Council's officer scheme of delegation. Non-contract decisions up to £250k.**

⁴ Options must be given.

⁵ If none, please state none. No Member having a disclosable pecuniary interest or officer having an interest in any matter (whether pecuniary or otherwise required to be declared) should take a decision in relation to that matter. Other interests of a non-disqualifying nature should be recorded here. Any dispensation in place in relation to the matter should also be recorded here. This may include other elected Members, officers, stakeholders and the local community.

⁶ The signatory must be duly authorised by Executive Director to make a decision in accordance with the relevant sub-delegation scheme. It is not acceptable for the signature to be 'pp' for the authorised signatory.

Participation in the scheme would secure funding not otherwise available to the local authority to undertake work supporting asylum seekers and refugees. It is anticipated that this would reduce pressure on other services and support integration into existing communities.

It is recommended to approve Option b.

Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Community Safety has been consulted on the proposals to accept the funding and recruit two fixed-term posts.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that funding be accepted and the posts created.

Implications:

What are the financial implications?

The total expected annual costs for establishing the two grade 7 posts is shown in the table below. Costs are shown based on bottom of scale, mid-point and top of scale and are inclusive of oncosts.

	Bottom Of Scale	Mid- Point	Top of Scale
	£k	£k	£k
LAASLO Officer (1 FTE)	39	41	45
Total Costs (2 FTE's)	78	82	90

Using the costs for the top of scale the total maximum costs for the two years would be £180k.

Funding is available from a variety of sources which can be seen in the table below.

	Top of Scale
	£k
Total Cost for LAASLO Officers (2 FTE for 2 years)	180
Funded By:-	

Delegated Officer Report

Decision Maker: Helen Lockwood
(Deputy Chief Executive – People and Place).

Date of Decision: January 2018

Subject: Participation in the Government's Controlling Migration Fund –
Supporting the Asylum Dispersal Scheme

Report Author: Stronger Communities Manager

Ward (s): Not Applicable

Reason for the decision: Oldham Council has been awarded funding (as part of a Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) bid) from the Government's Controlling Migration Fund to recruit two Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLOs) for two years. This report seeks approval to accept the funding awarded and create these posts.

Summary: GMCA has received funding from the Government's Controlling Migration Fund to recruit Local Authority Asylum Liaison Officers across the GM region. Funding will be disseminated to local authorities to recruit to these posts. Oldham Council has been allocated funding for two posts and this report seeks approval to accept the funding and create these posts.

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

Option a. Do not participate in the scheme.

Funding has already been awarded to GMCA in respect of LAASLO posts working across GM, including within the Oldham area. Declining the offer to participate in this scheme would mean that the council does not utilise additional resources available to provide support to residents in the Oldham area.

Option b. Participate in the scheme with two FTE fixed-term posts

Controlling Migration Fund	(100)
Manchester City Council	(56)
Income from North West Gateway Resettlement Partnership held by Oldham Council	(24)
Total Funding Available	(180)

Controlling Migration Fund is available for a two year period from when the posts are recruited to. The total available and anticipated funding is £100k, which equates to up to £50k per post.

Manchester City Council are holding surplus funding from the Home Office relating to the former asylum accommodation and support contract which was delivered by the North West Consortium (including Oldham Council). Colleagues across Greater Manchester have agreed that this funding can be used to supplement funding received from the Controlling Migration Fund in respect of LAASLO posts. Oldham's proportion of this funding is £56k. these two sources of funding alone would be sufficient to fully fund the two posts if appointments were made at the bottom of the scale

The potential, maximum shortfall of £24k would be met from income from the North West Gateway Resettlement Partnership held by Oldham Council. To date in 2018/19 this amounts to £45k.

There are no adverse financial implications as a result of this proposal.

(Jenny Howarth Senior Accountant/ Andy Cooper Senior Finance Manager)

What are the legal implications?

The fixed term employees would enjoy the same employment rights as permanent employees and at the end of the 2 year period there would be a cessation of employment that would entitle those employees to a redundancy payment, which should be budgeted. (Colin Brittain)

What are the procurement implications?

Not applicable

What are the Human Resources implications?

If approved, the Council's establishment control, and recruitment and selection policies and

procedures must be followed to fill these fixed-term positions. Also to note is that employees who acquire two years' service on a fixed term contract will be entitled to a redundancy payment on the expiry of the contract. (Lauren Jones, HR Business Partner)

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)

An initial EIA has not identified any adverse Equality Impact.

What are the property implications

Not applicable

Risks:

There are no risks associated with the recommendation, other than possibly redundancy costs.

Co-operative agenda

The remit of the posts will supports the Council's Cooperative Agenda by supporting refugees granted leave to remain to integrate within their local communities and gain timely access and advice to appropriate services such as housing, benefits, health, employment and English language.

In addition, it is hoped that by supporting individuals who have not been granted leave to remain, they will return to their home countries voluntarily without the need for enforcement action.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?

Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

No


List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:
None

Report Author Sign-off:	
Natalie Downs Stronger Communities Manager	
Date: 24/01/19.	

Please list and attach any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description
1	Background
2	Job description and person specification

In consultation with:

Martyn Bramwell	Signature
Date: 22/1/19	

Participation in Home Office and MHCLG's Controlling Migration Fund – Supporting the Asylum Dispersal Scheme

1 Background

- 1.1 In March 2018, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) submitted a joint proposal to the Government's Controlling Migration Fund to recruit Local Authority Asylum Liaison Officers across the GM region. This proposal has since been approved and GMCA has received £850,000. Apportioned funding will be disseminated to the ten local authorities and Oldham Council has been awarded a contribution towards funding for two posts.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The local authority works with Serco to manage the transition of asylum seekers into the Borough through the COMPASS contract and the role of LAASLO would provide an increased resource in this area and enable greater collaboration between both parties.
- 2.2 The existing COMPASS contracts are due to end in August 2019. The Home Office has established the Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation (AAST) project to design, develop and procure the future model for asylum accommodation and support, replacing the existing COMPASS arrangements when they expire in September 2019. These posts would also provide increased resource to support the transition to the new contract.
- 2.3 LAASLOs will deliver a tailored support service to asylum seekers and new refugees. For asylum seekers awaiting a decision, LAASLOs will help make them aware of the support available once a decision has been made, as well as preparing them for the consequence of a negative decision, by supporting a voluntary return to their home countries. For those granted refugee status, they will facilitate their transition into mainstream society during and after the move on period, by providing advice and information on essential services. It is recognised that some refugees find it difficult to transition to mainstream services. Providing a smooth transition from the asylum support system to mainstream services and getting refugees into employment, sustainable housing solutions and improving English language proficiency will help refugees, reduce service costs and have a positive impact on established communities.
- 2.4 The full cost of the two LAASLO posts will be recovered from GMCA and Manchester City Council (MCC). This includes £100,000 from the GMCA in apportioned funding from the Controlling Migration Fund. A further £56,000 will be paid from reserves held by MCC in respect of historic contracts delivered through the North West Consortium. The remainder will be funded by MCC through contracts undertaken by the North West Gateway Resettlement Partnership (NWGRP).

- 2.5** It is proposed that the LAASLO posts will be based within the Stronger Communities Service due to the close relationship with other roles within that service.
- 2.6** A copy of the LAASLO job description and person specification is attached at Appendix 2 and has been subject to the Council's job evaluation scheme.

Job Title Local Authority Asylum Support Officer (LAASLO)	
Directorate Health and Well-being	Division/Section Stronger Communities Team
Grade Grade 7	

Job Purpose

To be accountable to the Principal Emerging Communities Manager for facilitating the smooth transition of new refugees from government supported accommodation into mainstream society during their twenty eight day 'move on' period and to help facilitate the return of failed asylum seekers.

To work with the Home Office to manage a case load of asylum seekers supported under s.95 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999 by:

- Providing advice, information and guidance to those granted asylum, or other leave to remain in the UK, on how to access mainstream services.

To support asylum seekers awaiting a decision by:

- Preparing them for the consequences of a negative decision by supporting a managed return to the country of origin; and,
- Highlighting the support available in the event that a positive decision is made on an asylum claim.

To contribute to the work of the Emerging Communities Team including co-ordinating the consultation process with services in relation to the procurement of properties and developing activities and initiatives aimed at asylum seekers and refugees.

Key Tasks

1. To establish and maintain information of service users supported in Oldham.
2. To assess clients and provide advice and support during the 'move on' period on appropriate services e.g. housing, welfare benefits, health, employment, English language.
3. To assess clients and provide advice and support to facilitate their removal from the country where this is deemed to be the most appropriate option.
4. To work collaboratively with local statutory, voluntary, community and faith organisations by promoting their services and managing client referrals as appropriate.
5. To record all referrals made and work with statutory and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to track progress and monitor outcomes.
6. To report activity for the project to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority every quarter.
7. To evaluate the impact and success of interventions taken and the service provided to clients at the end of the first and second years and contribute to the government's evaluation of the service at the end of the second year.

8. To maintain a strategic oversight of the dispersal of asylum seekers within the Borough, ensuring that it does not impact adversely on existing communities and services, and co-ordinating the consultation process with services in relation to the procurement of properties for housing asylum seekers in the Borough.
9. To tailor the national approach to supporting successful new refugees by designing and agreeing innovative interventions appropriate to Oldham.
10. To devise and continually review support plans, keep appropriate records and produce reports as required.
11. To prepare and deliver training and presentations to individuals and agencies on a variety of topics.
12. To take into account the benefit to the established resident community of activities and interventions undertaken.
13. To work collaboratively with other members of the Emerging Communities Team to promote activities and initiatives aimed at benefiting asylum seekers and refugees.
14. To contribute to the work of the Migrant Communities Policy Group and to help inform the development of strategies and policies relating to asylum seekers and refugees.

Standard Duties

1. To actively promote the equalities and diversity agenda in the workplace and in service delivery.
2. To uphold and implement policies and procedures of the Council; including customer care, data protection, ICT, finance and health and safety policies.
3. To actively engage with the behaviours and values of the Council to promote and support our Co-operative Agenda.
4. To undertake continuous professional development and to be aware of new developments, legislation, initiatives, guidelines, policies and procedures as appropriate to the role.
5. Undertake any additional duties commensurate with the level of the post.

Contacts

Members of Parliament; elected members; senior Council officers and other staff across the Council; relevant external organisations; other local authorities; government departments; public.

Relationship To Other Posts In The Directorate

Responsible to: Principal Emerging Communities Manager

Responsible for: None

Special Conditions None

	DATE	NAME	POST TITLE
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Prepared	10.09.18	Natalie Downs	Stronger Communities Manager
Reviewed	15.09.18	Bruce Penhale	Assistant Director Communities and Early Intervention.
Reviewed			

OLDHAM COUNCIL

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officer (LAASLO)

	Selection criteria (Essential)	Selection criteria (Desirable)	How Assessed	
			Essential	Desirable
Education & Qualifications	<p>Sufficient literacy and numeracy skills to carry out the tasks and duties of the post to a high standard.</p> <p>Evidence of continued professional and personal development</p>		AF	AF
Experience	<p>Proven track record of experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <p>Experience of providing advice and/or working in partnership with other agencies to provide advice on issues such as housing, welfare benefits, immigration.</p> <p>Substantial experience of working with voluntary and community groups and partnership working.</p> <p>Experience of developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation systems</p> <p>Experience of working with Members and officers across departments within a local authority</p>		AF/I	
Skills & Abilities	<p>Ability to develop effective partnership working across organisations in the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors, to further the work of community development and bring about change.</p> <p>Excellent verbal and written communication skills with the ability to persuade, influence and negotiate to bring about</p>		AF/I	

	<p>behavioural change and achieve desired results/outcomes as necessary</p> <p>Ability to produce clear and concise reports and presentations</p> <p>Ability to work on own initiative, prioritise workload in order to meet deadlines and plan work programmes.</p>		<p>AF/I</p> <p>AF/I</p>	
Knowledge	<p>Knowledge and understanding of the Government's Immigration Act 2016 and in particular, the Voluntary Return Scheme.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the Government's asylum dispersal programme.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of support available for asylum seekers and refugees and in particular, Section 95 support.</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of other key legislation relevant to the role including the Data Protection Act 1998 Hate Crime Action Plan 2016; Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p> <p>Detailed understanding of the barriers to equality of opportunity, diversity and social inclusion faced by asylum seekers and refugees</p>		<p>AF/I</p> <p>AF/I</p> <p>AF/I</p> <p>AF/I</p> <p>AF/I</p>	
Work Circumstances	<p>Ability to work outside normal office hours.</p> <p>Must be able to travel flexibly around the borough</p>		<p>A</p> <p>A</p>	

NB. - Any candidate with a disability who meets the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.

Key

A – Application form

I – Interview

T - Test