

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC

Report to: **CABINET**

Report of: **Corporate Director - Place**

Date of Decision: **24 October 2017**

SUBJECT: **CONTROLLING MIGRATION FUND BID – TACKLING
ROGUE LANDLORDS AND SUPPORTING
COMMUNITIES**

Key Decision: Yes **Relevant Forward Plan Ref:**
If not in the Forward Plan: **Chief Executive approved** **X**
(please "X" box) **O&S Chair approved** **X**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s) **Councillor Peter Griffiths – Housing and Homes**
Councillor Tristan Chatfield – Transparency, Openness
and Equality
Councillor Paulette Hamilton – Health and Social Care

Relevant O&S Chair: **Councillor Victoria Quinn – Housing and Homes**
Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq – Corporate Resources
and Governance
Councillor John Cotton – Health and Social Care

Wards affected: **City wide**

1. Purpose of report:

- 1.1 To approve a bid to Government for resources from the Controlling Migration Fund to support work with communities impacted by migration and to tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector.
- 1.2 This proposed decision was not included in the Forward Plan because it was intended to seek approval to bid at a later meeting of Cabinet.

2. Decision(s) recommended:
That Cabinet:-

- 2.1 Approve a proposed bid for resources to the Government's Controlling Migration Fund totalling £896,251 over 3 years (2017/18 – 2019/20).
- 2.2 Approve that in the event of the Council being successful, a further report be submitted to Cabinet to agree the delivery plan.

Lead Contact Officer(s): Peter Hobbs, Service Head, PRS and Tenant Engagement

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3. Consultation

3.1 Internal

This proposal has been discussed with the Cabinet Members Councillor Peter Griffiths – Housing and Homes, Councillor Tristan Chatfield - Transparency, Openness & Equality and Councillor Paulette Hamilton - Health and Social Care and has been referred to relevant Scrutiny Chairs for comment.

Consultation with other elected members will take place once the outcome of the bid is known and any target wards are determined.

3.2 External

The proposal to submit a bid to Government for Controlling Migration Fund has been discussed with the city's Landlord Forum Steering Group, which is supportive of the Council and other agencies tackling irresponsible and criminal landlords.

4. Compliance Issues:

4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?

This proposal is consistent with the Council's priority for "Housing – so Birmingham's a great city to live in", by supporting work to improve standards in the private rented sector and support private tenants to be good neighbours. It also supports the objectives of the Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership to tackle exploitation of vulnerable people affected by Modern Day Slavery and Child Sexual Exploitation.

4.2 Financial Implications (Will decisions be carried out within existing finance and Resources?)

The bid for funding will provide resources to deliver a targeted plan and will operate within the budget approved. The total bid is for £896,251 over 3 years.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
TOTAL	£97,361	£391,945	£406,945
OVERALL TOTAL	£896,251		

The funding is provided as a non-ring-fenced revenue grant. The Council will have to provide audited accounts to Government as required under the terms of the funding agreement. The Council is not required to provide match funding or commit other financial resources as part of the project. The funding is likely to lever in resources from other agencies in the form of staff time to help deliver the priorities set out in the bid.

4.3 Legal Implications

The proposal to bid for funding is within the legal powers of the Council under and is in compliance with the prospectus set out in Appendix 1.

Data Protection

The requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into consideration in terms of the processing, management and sharing of any data involved in the proposal. If successful the project will make use of existing Data Processing/ Sharing Agreements with key partners.

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty

A Equality Assessment will be undertaken once a decision on the application for funding is made and the project is able to move forward

5. **Relevant background/chronology of key events:**

- 5.1 Birmingham is a multi-cultural, diverse city and is a “City of Sanctuary”. In the last 5-10 years it has seen a significant impact of the arrival of overseas migrants, asylum seekers and movement from EU accession states. The impact of migration can bring significant benefits to the city and local communities but some areas have experienced particular challenges. This has put a considerable pressure on service areas, in particular those relating to housing and homelessness, where there is greater reliance on housing migrants in the private rented sector (PRS), often in poor conditions.
- 5.2 The city is also experiencing increasing concerns from residents and agencies about the growth of poor quality supported housing in the city. There appears to be a movement of people leaving institutions and prison system coming to Birmingham which may involve the exploitation of vulnerable people in the supported housing market. There is increasing concern about safeguarding, provision of meaningful support and the development of HMOs in neighbourhoods (“rent to rent” model). The Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership held a seminar with partners in November 2016 which considered these issues and what appeared to be a lack of control over standards and support to vulnerable tenants.
- 5.3 Finally the emerging issue of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) is giving serious cause for concern and again involves exploitation of vulnerable people and in some cases Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Those exposed to this threat are often very vulnerable, trafficked from outside the UK and end up in the PRS, without access to services and unable to assert their rights. The report of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner – responding to modern day slavery within the homelessness sector, was published in January 2017.
- 5.4 The Council and its partners have taken positive action to try to tackle these issues. Housing is a top priority for the city and the Housing Birmingham – Strategy Statement sets out objectives to improve supply and quality of housing and to meet demand and to improve standards in the PRS and tackle irresponsible landlords. The Council has commenced consultation on use of Selective licensing in target areas to assist in improving standards in the PRS and enforce against “rogue” landlords. Housing Birmingham has set up a review of homelessness and has set up a Homelessness Positive Pathways Board, to develop approaches to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping which is also working alongside the West Midlands Mayor’s Homeless Taskforce.

The Council has received Homelessness Trailblazer funding from Government and this is being used to try to sustain residents in their homes if affected by harassment, illegal eviction or poor property conditions. The Community Safety Partnership continues to target this issue and share intelligence in tackling organised crime and trafficking. A MDS coordinator has been appointed and the CSP is in process of setting up a strategic partnership which will link into the west midlands anti – slavery network and will set up an operational group which includes partners from DWP, Fire, Police, Planning, Highways, Severn Trent, PRS Services, Trading Standards, Health & Safety Executive, HMRC and others as needed.

- 5.5 The Council, however, like many other local authorities, is facing considerable resource pressures and is unable to fully respond to the issues in neighbourhoods and does not have the capacity to fully enforce standards as required. Often migrants are unwilling or unable to make requests to authorities and resources are needed to proactively seek out private rented accommodation to ensure it is safe and appropriate and the tenants are secure in their home and fully informed on their rights and responsibilities. The impact of living in poor quality housing can be significant and affect both physical and mental health.
- 5.6 In recognition of the pressures caused by migration, the Government has introduced a Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) (See Appendix 1) to provide additional support to those areas experiencing pressures. The Fund will be available over the four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Unlike previous similar funds the Controlling Migration Fund focuses on responding to the problems caused by high migration into localities as identified by local authorities and will deliver benefits to the established resident population. The Fund has two parts.
- A local service impacts part of £100m, to help English local authorities and their communities experiencing high and unexpected volumes of immigration to ease pressures on local services.
 - An enforcement part worth £40m to direct enforcement action against people in the UK illegally in order to reduce the pressure on local areas.
- 5.7 More information on the Government's prospectus for the Controlling Migration Fund can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-migration-fund-prospectus>
- 5.8 **The Proposal (see appendix 2)**
- 5.9 The Controlling Migration Fund bid provides an opportunity to secure resources over a number of years to support communities. The Council and its partners proposal will
- Tackling Rogue and Criminal Landlords
 - Inform communities
 - Supporting individuals in high risk circumstances
- 5.10 The bid builds on the success of the Rogue Landlord Fund project in 2016 and continues to seek to work with partners and community groups to deliver positive outcomes.

- 5.11 The Council and its partners will if successful, undertake an evaluation of the project to determine where good practice has supported the objectives, what impacts have occurred and whether alternative approaches can help in future to improve standards in the PRS.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

- 6.1 The Council and its partners are unable to identify additional resources from mainstream budgets to carry out this work and will continue to respond to issues as at present.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

- 7.1 To approve a bid for resources to the Controlling Migration Fund to enable the Council and its partners to proactively target the impacts caused by migration in areas of the city, in particular tackle irresponsible and criminal landlords, support local communities and assist migrant households to integrate and become good neighbours.

Signatures

Date

Cabinet Members

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Cllr Peter Griffiths,
Housing and Homes

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Councillor Tristan Chatfield
Transparency, Openness and Equality

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Councillor Paulette Hamilton
Health and Social Care

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Chief Officer

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Jacqui Kennedy, Corporate Director – Place

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List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

Nil

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

1. Controlling Migration Fund: mitigating the impacts of immigration on local communities. prospectus, November 2016 – Department for Communities and Local Government
2. Proposed Bid to DCLG for Controlling Migration Fund

Report Version

Dated