



THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Report title: Contract Award – Refugee Resettlement Contract

Date: 19th May 2021

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Contributors:

Fenella Beckman, Director of Housing Services
Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm
Director of Corporate Resources,
Director of Law, Governance & HR

Outline and recommendations

We have received and evaluated tenders for the Refugee Resettlement Programme contract. We consider that Refugee Council represents a recommended level of value for money and quality of the returned tenders.

It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

- Approve the appointment of Refugee Council – for the sum of £1,707,728. This will enable intensive support for up to 100 refugee families.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

A delegated decision on the award of the current contract was taken by the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment on 12 July 2019.

A report seeking permission to re-procure the support service was agreed by Mayor and Cabinet at their meeting of 15 January 2020.

A delegated decision to extend the current contract until 18 February 2021 was taken by the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment on 24 March 2020.

A delegated decision to extend the current contract until 18 July 2021 was taken by the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment on 3 February 2021.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the tender process to procure a supplier to deliver ongoing support for up to 100 refugee families as part of Lewisham Council's Refugee Resettlement Programme for a contract value of £1,707,728.
- 1.2. This support includes but is not limited to:
 - 1.2.1. Making initial reception arrangements for new arrivals (e.g. transportation to their accommodation after arrival, provision of food, making arrival aware of the value of local currency).
 - 1.2.2. Providing ongoing casework support for new arrivals.
 - 1.2.3. Registering families with local services, such as health, education and benefits.
 - 1.2.4. Developing and delivering a support programme based on each individual's needs for the first 12 months after their arrival.
 - 1.2.5. Ensuring translation services are available where required.
 - 1.2.6. Ongoing support for families after their first 12 months, so that they are able to integrate fully in to their local community.
- 1.3. Following the evaluation of tenders, we are satisfied that the Refugee Council, who supply the current contract, submitted the highest quality bid and represent the best value for money, and will be able to deliver the service requirements detailed within the contract.
- 1.4. We receive funding for each individual who arrives who has been referred by Home Office. The main funding we receive is outlined below:

Overview of Home Office funding for families arriving under Refugee Resettlement (£):

	Adult	Children 5-18 years old	Children 3-4 years old	Children U-3 years old
Year 1	8,520	8,520	8,520	8,520
Year 1 Education	850	4,500	2,250	0
Year 2	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

Year 3	3,700	3,700	3,700	3,700
Year 4	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Year 5	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000

E.g.: a family of two adults and two children aged 5-18 that is in its first 12 months of arrival. The Council will receive £44,780 in funding.

E.g. the same family, but in year 3. The Council will receive £14,800.

- 1.5. Financially, the programme therefore aims to be cost neutral to the borough – any expenditure is covered by the funding we receive from Home Office.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

Approve the award of a two year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years to British Refugee Council for a value of £1,707,728.00 over two years to deliver Lewisham Council's Refugee Resettlement Programme, welcoming and resettling families. Should the option to extend the contract by another two years be exercised, the additional cost would be £988,534.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. It supports the priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy 2018-2022:

- Open Lewisham;
- Tackling the housing crisis;
- Giving children and young people the best start in life;
- Building an inclusive local economy;
- Delivering and defending: health, social care and support;
- Making Lewisham greener; and
- Building safer communities.

- 3.2. Of these, while several are indirectly met by this work, the Open Lewisham priority is most directly supported, including its three commitments, that:

- Lewisham will be a place where diversity and cultural heritage is recognised as a strength and is celebrated;
- Hate crime will not be tolerated; and
- Lewisham will be a Sanctuary Borough, welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and protecting the rights of all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

- 3.3. The UK government said it would support the resettlement of 20,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees by 2020 through the VPRS. This work is coordinated by the HO and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Once this target is reached, the UK government would move to the Global Resettlement Scheme to resettle a broader range of refugees (i.e. not exclusively refugees who are victims of the Syrian conflict).

- 3.4. At a meeting of Full Council on 21 September 2016, after representations from various community groups in support of the programme, all councillors voted in favour of participating in the scheme. In September 2018 Mayor and Cabinet agreed to resettle a

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

further 100 refugee families.

- 3.5. New arrivals to the UK as part of the VPRS were suspended in March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In November 2020, HO announced that it would resettle an additional 232 families to meet its 20,000 target for VPRS. None of these arrivals were referred to Lewisham.
- 3.6. However, in February 2021, HO referred three families to Lewisham Council. In March 2021, HO confirmed that they would begin resuming new arrivals as part of the Global Resettlement Scheme shortly. We expect to start receiving new arrivals again from July 2021.
- 3.7. As of 28th April 2021, we have resettled 33 families, with 30 families currently living in the borough.

4. Background

- 4.1. Resettlement through the programme requires Lewisham Council to accept referrals from the Home Office, and take responsibility for the families accepted from arrival at the airport. Families are welcomed from the arrivals gate and taken to their new home, supported immediately with information on how to deal with emergencies, an initial cash allowance, and key contacts.
- 4.2. Resettlement support must be provided to support families to move towards independence, and this focuses on tenancy sustainment and management; budgeting, including benefits management; ESOL, employment, education and training; and health and care needs.
- 4.3. Those welcomed on the programme have Refugee Status for the five year duration, therefore they also have recourse to public funds and are able to access all mainstream services.
- 4.4. The British Refugee Council have provided the support service since 19 August 2019 and the current contract is due to end on 18 July 2021.
- 4.5. In March 2020, the Home Office suspended all new arrivals on the programme, due to the global pandemic of COVID-19.

5. Tendering process

- 5.1. Permission to proceed to tender was gained from Mayor and Cabinet on 15 January 2020. The project had a pre-tender estimate value of £2,285,000, based on the value of the current contract and the projection for new arrivals as part of the programme.
- 5.2. It was agreed that the tendering process should be a single-stage open tender. The scheme went out to tender in February and closed in September 2020.
- 5.3. Due to the cessation of arrivals and uncertainty over the future of the programme, evaluation was suspended until March 2021. It is expected that the successful tenderer will begin provision of the service on 19 July 2021.
- 5.4. Six suppliers submitted a tender for the contract.

6. Evaluation process

- 6.1. Evaluation was based on the tenderers' responses to method statements included in the ITT. Submitted tenders were analysed and evaluated using Lewisham's standard tender evaluation processes.
- 6.2. Only one bidder submitted a valid tender. Of the six suppliers who submitted a tender, three were disqualified before evaluation. Reasons for their disqualification were:
 - 6.2.1. In the case of one bidder, failure to submit the required documents, including the

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

method statement form and the standard questionnaire;

6.2.2. Failure to locate accommodation within the borough of Lewisham, a key part of the requirement;

6.2.3. Failure to submit safeguarding documents, a key part of the requirement.

6.3. Of the three bids that were evaluated, two were disqualified as they did not meet the minimum score threshold for Method Statement 1.

6.4. Scores are provided below. Bid synopses are provided in part 2 of this report

6.4.1.

Method Statement	Refugee Council	Bidder A	Bidder B
1a	10	5	5
1b	8	6	3
1c	9	5	5
2	9	Disqualified after MS1 as failed to achieve minimum score	Disqualified after MS1 as failed to achieve minimum score
3	8		
4	10		
5a	10		
5b	8		
5c	7		
6	8		
7	9		

7. Budget

7.1. The price quoted by Refugee Council for a two year contract is £1,707,728.

7.2. The current contract, which has run for two years, has cost a total of £488,256. However, the current contract provides support for 30 families. The future contract aims to provide continued support for these families, plus a minimum of 70 additional families – a total of 100 families. Per family, the proposed cost of support provided to each family is comparable to the current contract.

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

- 7.3. As highlighted in the summary, we receive funding for each person who arrives.. Income to pay for the contract is generated through each new arrival.

8. Contract information and service specification

- 8.1. The contract lasts for an initial two years, with an option to extend the contract for an additional two years.
- 8.2. The initial two years costs £1,707,728; the additional two years cost would be £988,534. The total contract for four years would therefore be £2,696,262. We will review the current contract provision at regular intervals and ahead of any decision to extend the contract.
- 8.3. The winning supplier will deliver against the conditions and outcomes set out in the Home Office Funding Instruction and the tender pack's service specification. These include but are not limited to:
- 8.3.1. Making initial reception arrangements for new arrivals (e.g. transportation to their accommodation after arrival, provision of food, making arrival aware of the value of local currency).
 - 8.3.2. Providing ongoing casework support for new arrivals.
 - 8.3.3. Registering families with local services, such as health, education and benefits.
 - 8.3.4. Developing and delivering a support programme based on each individual's needs for the first 12 months after their arrival.
 - 8.3.5. Ensuring translation services are available where required.
 - 8.3.6. Ongoing support for families after their first 12 months, so that they are able to integrate fully in to their local community.
 - 8.3.7. Operate a 24/7 emergency hour phone line in case of emergencies.
 - 8.3.8. Work in close partnership with relevant organisations to deliver the service.
 - 8.3.9. Ensure safeguarding of children and adults.
- 8.4. The supplier must submit monthly management information to Lewisham Council, detailing any issues and providing a summary of key information agreed with Lewisham. Lewisham Council will interview refugee families at regular intervals to ensure that minimum service standards are met.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. This report seeks approval for the award of the refugee resettlement contract to the Refugee Council for a total sum of £1,707,728. This will enable intensive support to be provided for up to 100 refugee families.
- 9.2. As outlined in this report, the authority receives grant funding from the Home Office to cover all costs associated with the Refugee Resettlement Programme. The funding is allocated on a per person basis, across a 5 year period, based on the age of the refugee on arrival in the UK. Funding will therefore be phased over a 5 year period as each refugee family arrives in the UK and is settled in Lewisham.
- 9.3. The award of this contact at a total value of £1,707,728 for up to 100 families will be fully funded from this grant income. Payments to the Refugee Council under this contract will be made based on the number of actual families accommodated. This structure of payments will help to mitigate the risk of paying for suspension of arrivals.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. The Council's Constitution contains requirements about how to procure and manage

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

contracts. These are in the Contract Procedure Rules (Constitution Part IV). Some of the requirements in those Rules are based on the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) with which the Council must comply. Given the value of the contract the Regulations apply.

- 10.2. The report proposes the establishment of a contract for two years with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years. The potential value of the contract including the extension is above £500,000, which means that this is a Category A contract for the purposes of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and one which is to be awarded by Mayor and Cabinet.
- 10.3. This contract has been externally and openly advertised as required by the Regulations and the Council’s Constitution. If the proposal to award the contract is approved, award notices must be published on OJEU and Contracts Finder in the prescribed form.
- 10.4. The report explains the evaluation approach and process applied to the bid and the reasons for recommending the successful bid for approval. The Invitation to Tender set out that tenderers had to reach specified scores. The process followed, including exclusion of tenderers who did not reach the minimum score, was in compliance with the advertised and required procedures.
- 10.5. This decision is a Key Decision under Article 16.2 (c) (xxiii) of the Constitution as it has a value of more than £200,000. It is therefore required to be contained in the current Key Decision Plan.
- 10.6. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.7. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - 10.7.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - 10.7.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 10.7.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 10.8. The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 10.9. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>.
- 10.10. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

- 10.10.1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 - 10.10.2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
 - 10.10.3. Engagement and the equality duty
 - 10.10.4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
 - 10.10.5. Equality Information and the equality duty
- 10.11. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. The service directly supports vulnerable refugees with a range of protected characteristics, of which there is a higher than average representation amongst service users due to the nature of refugee resettlement supporting the most vulnerable families. Continuity of provision is particularly important in light of the heightened risk for these families linked directly to protected characteristics like age, disability and maternity.

12. Climate change and environmental implications

- 12.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from this report. There will be an ongoing expectation of any provider working with the Council to operate in line with the Council's values, and the Corporate Strategy which sets out the Council's objectives around becoming a greener Lewisham was provided to all bidders.

13. Crime and disorder implications

- 13.1. There are no specific crime and disorder implications to this report. The supplier is required under the original specification to report to us any incidents and will continue to do so. To date there have been three hate crimes reported. The supplier supported the individual to report this to police.

14. Health and wellbeing implications

- 14.1. While direct delivery of health and wellbeing provision is outside of the scope of this contract, service users are likely to have experienced significant trauma, and will all have experienced displacement which often means health and wellbeing needs are neglected as a result of the environment and circumstances.
- 14.2. The service will be supporting refugees resettled to access health and wellbeing services and the provider has been ensuring all families have accessible information from Public Health in their first language and orally where there are literacy issues. Stable ongoing provision established through this extension should have a positive impact on the health of the service users and wider community by ensuring they are properly supported and kept informed of latest advice relating to the pandemic.

15. Social value implications

- 15.1. Refugee Council demonstrated how it will deliver against several of Lewisham Council's social value outcomes. Lewisham Council's social value outcomes are:

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>

- 15.1.1. Employment, Skills and Economy
- 15.1.2. Creating a Greener Lewisham
- 15.1.3. Healthier Lewisham
- 15.1.4. Training Lewisham's Future
- 15.1.5. Further details are provided in part two of this report.

16. Report author and contact

- 16.1. Jack Skelly, Housing Partnerships and Strategy Development Manager,
jack.skelly@lewisham.gov.uk

17. Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources

- 17.1. Tony Riordan, Housing Finance, tony.riordan@lewisham.gov.uk

18. Comments for and on behalf of the Director of Law, Governance and HR

- 18.1. Mia Agnew, Senior Lawyer, Mia.agnew@lewisham.gov.uk, Ext. 47546

Is this report easy to understand?

Please give us feedback so we can improve.

Go to <https://lewisham.gov.uk/contact-us/send-us-feedback-on-our-reports>