

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Procurement Approval for Immigration Advice Service
Decision Maker:	Patrick Odling-Smee
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Gillian Ford
SLT Lead:	Patrick Odling-Smee
Report Author and contact details:	Lee Watson Lee.watson@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	There is a need to ensure we are able to provide additional immigration support to our newly arrived residents
Financial summary:	The anticipated cost of the contract, £0.133m, can be fully funded from existing grant monies from MHCLG.
Relevant OSC:	Peoples OSC
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy X

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council X

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION
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To approve the procurement of an immigration advice service for Havering
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AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Scheme 3.3.3

Powers common to all Strategic Directors

- 4.1 To approve commencement of a tendering process for all contracts below a total contract value £1,000,000.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 1.1 This Decision seeks Directors' approval to agree to go out to tender for the provision of bespoke Immigration Advice, currently run by Praxis, following the current provision ending in February 2026
- 1.2 Havering seek to procure a new stand-alone offer which will provide immigration advice to Havering residents with precarious status with a view to regularise their status giving them access to public funds thus reducing the cost of the council's obligation in providing financial and accommodation support to these residents while they have no recourse. We currently have a six month wavier in place with Praxis whilst procurement of the tender is taking place.
- 1.1 The need is for face to face immigration advice and follow up case work for 0.8 FTE OISC level 2 immigration advisor (and associated support). This contract will run from 01.03.26 to 31.09.2027 (18 months) subject to procurement timelines, approximate cost £133,000, fully funded from The Homes for Ukraine Grant (Funding from the MHCLG received on a quarterly basis allows for the commissioning or provide services that ensure guests and sponsors are provided with a source of advice and support to assist with registering for mainstream benefits and services, including where necessary specialist public health services and community integration.
- 1.2 Havering has supported over 1500 refugees and people seeking asylum since launching in July 2022. It has built partnerships with over 30 voluntary and community organisations. Havering supports people seeking sanctuary with their health and wellbeing, access to advice and support, to realise their rights and to help them lead independent, healthy and happy lives. The programme prioritises face-to-face interactions by attending various locations each week, including a weekly one-stop shop at the YMCA reducing barriers to access and building trust. The Havering team benefits from employing people with lived experience who themselves have experienced resettlement in the UK and together speak 16 different languages.
- 1.3 Our current immigration advice service currently has over 20 cases with Havering at any one time to work through, not just status, but any visa issues that we are unable to deal with.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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- 1.4 If this procurement does not progress, there will be no immigration offer provided by Havering Council to support any refugee pathway and asylum seekers on immigration issues.
- 1.5 Access to immigration advice is an essential intervention for families to resolve their immigration status, gain recourse to public funds, extensions of visa, any issues with current visas and exit Local Authority support.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council has been kept informed of the requirements that local councils have in providing support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Lee Watson

Designation: Refugee and Crisis Response Manager



Signature:

Date: 22.09.25

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Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to procure the contract under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

8.2.2 The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's s.1 power are engaged by this decision.

8.2.3 The contract value is below the services threshold of the Procurement Act 2023. The procurement is therefore not caught by the full Procurement Act 2023 regime.

8.2.4 the procurement must however comply with the Council's Standing Orders.

This decision paper is seeking approval to procure an 18-month immigration advice contract valued at £133,000. This will be funded through the Homes for Ukraine Grant from MHCLG. The council has received this grant consistently over the past four years, and the £1.6 million allocation for 2025/26 has already earmarked funding for this service. Additional flexibility is available through the Afghan Resettlement Scheme and the Asylum Dispersal Grant, both of which may be used to support the service if required.

The contract will deliver a range of targeted services, including:

- Attend and participate in a minimum of 24 drop-ins per year, aiming for 2 per month.
- Provide up to 4 days per week OISC level 2 Immigration advice: 55 beneficiaries for assessments, of which 18- 20 beneficiaries for caseload per year.
- Provide 1 training sessions/workshops of ½ day to council staff per year.
- Utilise a referral system.
- Quarterly monitoring reports on outcomes and outputs
- Issue feedback questionnaires when cases are closed

This investment could result in cost avoidance through reduced reliance on emergency housing, social care, and other public services, while supporting vulnerable migrants to secure legal status and access employment. Although the financial impact cannot be quantified at this time, it will be monitored through quarterly reporting to assess progress and inform future decision-making.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Standard paragraph

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

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- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out and on this occasion this isn't required

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations.

There are not equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no environmental and climate change implications and risks

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Specification of services

APPENDICES

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Patrick Odling-Smee

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 21/10/25

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____