EMERGENCY COMMITTEE'S MINUTES.

Hybrid meeting, 12th October 2023.

Emergency Committee.

Present: Susan Aitken (Chair), Allan Casey, George Redmond and Martha Wardrop.

Apologies: Richard Bell, Jacqueline McLaren and Jon Molyneux.

Attending: M Hughes (Clerk); A O'Donnell, Chief Executive; M Millar, Director of Legal and Administration; C Edgar, Director of Communication and Corporate Governance; and S Millar, Chief Officer, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership.

Streamlined Asylum Process - Report by Chief Executive noted etc – Authority to Chief Executive.

1 There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive regarding a decision by the Home Office to accelerate decision making in relation to approximately 2,500 batched asylum decisions in Glasgow by the end of the year and highlighting the associated impacts

(1) advising

(a) of the likely impact of this decision on the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in 2023/24 and the potential costs which could be as much as £53.4m taken as a full year effect and based on known numbers;

(b) that the UK Government had confirmed that it would not provide any financial support to dispersal areas impacted by the batched decisions;

(c) of the streamlined asylum process and that this process would put significant additional pressure on the rest of the homelessness service which had already led to a rise in rough sleeping in the city;

(d) that based on current data, approximately 77% of households who received a positive decision in Glasgow went on to make a homelessness application with the local authority and that around 82% of homeless applications made by those who were previously asylum seekers resulted in a permanent tenancy being secured which would mean that, based on the modelling detailed in the report, an additional 1,138 lets would be required to meet this increase in demand;

(e) that it was not clear where these additional lets could be met from as there was already a shortfall of approximately 1,600 properties to deal with current pressures and that this would lead to people spending

longer periods in hotel and bed and breakfast accommodation, where this could be sourced, and if unable to be sourced could lead to an increase in rough sleeping;

(f) that it was also anticipated that Glasgow might see an increase in those seeking to access homelessness services from cities outwith Glasgow;

(g) that in addition to the positive decisions, COSLA had indicated that there was likely to be around 700 negative asylum decisions and that as these households had No Resource To Public Funds (NRPF) there was every likelihood that Glasgow would see an increased pattern of people with NRPF rough sleeping and requiring intense outreach capacity from the third sector and health and social care support for those who were deemed most vulnerable;

(h) that for those families with children, the Council retained a statutory role in providing accommodation through section 22 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and that this would have a further bearing on financial pressures;

(i) that the number of people likely requiring homelessness assistance would increase resulting in the HSCPs Homelessness Service finding it exceedingly challenging to meet the additional demand with potential additional staffing resources required estimated at a cost of £509,892, as detailed in the report; and

(j) that given the housing and emergency accommodation challenges within the city it was highly likely that an alternative source of accommodation would be required which would need extensive scoping and a return to contingency planning arrangements previously considered during the planning for Ukrainian arrivals such as rest centre scenarios and that as the situation could unfold extremely rapidly officers might need to make urgent decisions to respond to destitution;

(2) detailing 2 different costing scenarios for Glasgow with the assumption of scenario 1 being 2,500 asylum seekers of which 1,800 receive a positive decision resulting in outturn increasing from £10.1m to £27.6m and for scenario 2 being an assumption of current rate of decisions resulting in outturn increasing from £10.1m to £15.8m;

(3) highlighting the full year implications for 2024/25 and if the anticipated numbers, as detailed in the report proceeded this would represent an additional pressure of £53.4m for the service in addition to the underlying budget pressure of £16.7m, representing a potential total budget pressure of £70.1m for 2024/25; and

(4) confirming that

(a) work was currently being undertaken by the HSCP to mitigate the impact of the significant increase in demand for refugee services and accommodation in Glasgow, as detailed in the report; and

(b) there were a number of obvious risks and it was proposed that a formal risk register be developed.

After consideration, the committee

(i) noted

(A) the contents of the report;

(B) that the financial impact of this decision could cost £53.4m;

(C) that the UK Government had advised that it would not be providing funding to cover these costs; and

(D) the operational impact, the limited capacity within available accommodation in the city and the requirement for increased use of bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation;

(ii) authorised the Chief Executive to take decisions as outlined in the report and that these decisions would be reported retrospectively to the relevant committee; and

(iii) agreed to consider all available routes in escalating these matters to the Home Office and UK Government as well as any legal avenues given the wider financial, reputational and economic implications.