

## REPORT TO EXECUTIVE



<b>DATE</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Development Control</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	<b>Wilma Waddingham</b>
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## EX-OFFENDERS GOVERNMENT SUPPORT GRANT

## PURPOSE

1. To seek approval to accept the funding award from the Accommodation for Ex-offenders Programme to allow for the continuation of an East Lancashire wide programme of services targeted at reducing repeat offending by accessing settled accommodation and providing support.

## RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Executive,

Approves acceptance of the revenue funding award of £232,808 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to allow for the continuation of funding for 2 x support officer posts working within Calico's Gateway Housing Project and the provision of incentive packages to assist with access into the private rented sector.

Delegates authority to the Head of Housing and Development Control to negotiate and enter into the relevant agreements with Pendle Borough Council, Rossendale Borough Council, Hyndburn Borough Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, as partner local authorities, and Calico Homes as service provider, for the receipt of the funding and the delivery of the services.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To continue to provide support to ex-offenders to access and sustain their own accommodation with the aim of reduction re-offending in the future.

To assist the Council to meet its statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. Since 2021 authorities in East Lancashire have worked together to secure accommodation for ex-offenders funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing

and Communities and have commissioned Calico Homes to deliver this support on their behalf. The Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Programme (AFEO) was introduced to support homeless prison leavers to access the private rented sector and reduce the instances of rough sleeping and reoffending.

The funding and services provided assist the council in fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to preventing and relieving homelessness.

Between 2021 and 2023 Pendle Borough Council led on the bid on behalf of the East Lancashire local authorities, but in 2023 the funding criteria was changed with Burnley Borough Council being the only authority able to bid on behalf of East Lancashire Authorities.

In order to ensure East Lancashire Councils continued to benefit from AFEO funding Burnley Borough Council agreed to act as lead authority and submit a joint bid on behalf of Rossendale, Pendle, Hyndburn and Ribblesdale Councils. The bid was successful, and the Councils have been awarded a total of £232,808 to support ex-offenders into settled accommodation. The funding runs up to 31st March 2025. The proposal is to fund 2 AFEO support workers to work across the five local authority areas to provide support and assistance to ex-offenders to secure and settle into permanent housing in the private rented sector.

This funding will be received in two tranches per year.

April 2023 - £58,202

Sept 2023 - £58,202

April 2024 - £58,202

Sept 2024 - £58,202

### **AFEO Support Officer**

Calico Homes have provided AFEO support officers since 2021 on behalf of East Lancashire local authorities and it is proposed to continue to fund this service from the funding award. The service operates out of Calico's Gateway Housing Project and seeks to identify suitable housing and support for those individuals who are leaving prison or have served a prison sentence within the last 12 months. The project will employ two full time officers at a cost of £137,500 over a two-year period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

The project will aim to assist an estimated 80 ex-offenders over the two-year period across the five local authority areas.

### **Incentives**

Additional funding of £95,308 has been awarded as part of the AFEO fund to provide incentive packages to private sector landlord to assist and support clients into private rented accommodation. This package can include, bonds, rent in advance and starter packs for the clients. The overall aim of the programme is to provide the right support and assistance to reduce re-offending and returns to prison.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION**

5. The funding award will cover the costs of providing 2 x AFEO support officers in full for two years that will assist an estimated 80 ex-offenders across East Lancashire into settled accommodation. The support officers will be employed through Calico Homes, the project funded in full from the grant award and there will be no costs borne by the Council.

As the applicant and recipient of the funding there is a risk of claw back to the Council if the funding is not judged to have been spent in accordance with the grant conditions. Due to the experience gained from the previous operation of the programme and the good partnership working between the five local authorities and Calico Homes this is considered to be a very low risk.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6. There are no direct policy implications. This scheme will be delivered within the Councils existing policy framework which supports the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy.

## **DETAILS OF CONSULTATION**

7. None

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8. None

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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