

MINUTES OF MEETING URGENT DECISIONS HELD ON THURSDAY, 30TH APRIL, 2020, 9.00AM

Present: Councillor Joseph Ejiofor – Leader of the Council

Also Attending: Emma Williamson, Ayshe Simsek

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

30. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO RENT 104 ROOMS AT FINSBURY PARK TRAVELODGE FROM MAY 15TH (OR AS SOON AS IS PRACTICABLE AFTER THIS DECISION IS MADE) UNTIL 30 JUNE 2020 AND GENERAL UPDATE ON PROVISION TO HOUSE SINGLE HOMELESS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Leader noted that at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis the Government asked Councils to take an expansive view of housing the homeless.

It was noted that due to Covid-19 officers have been using the Council's discretion to accommodate people who would otherwise be expected to make their own arrangements. This included rough sleepers, and people at risk of rough sleeping regardless of local connection, immigration status, eligibility or priority need.

It was further noted that officers have provided for 216 individuals with hotel provision so far, with 58 spaces coming on-line in Red House and Cranwood in the coming weeks, and the Council expected the need to continue up to at least a further 160 individuals.

This urgent decision was required to secure these 104 rooms until June 30 2020 to ensure the Council was still able to meet this commitment.

The Leader considered the report and exempt information and:

RESOLVED

1. To waive the Contract Standing Orders 9.01 to 9.07 of the Constitution.
2. To agree to the Council entering into a contract to rent 104 rooms at Finsbury Park Travelodge until end June 2020 at a total cost set out in Part B of the report for the purposes set out in paragraph 1.4 of the report.

3. To note the amount already spent or committed to in the provision of 240 units and the likely forecast in order to meet this need going forward.
4. To approve the virement of £2m from the Emergency Response Contingency in the General Fund, in order to meet the cost of the additional Covid-19 related housing pressures up to the end of June, including the initiative proposed in this report.

Reasons for decision

Due to Covid-19 officers were using the Council's discretion to accommodate people who would otherwise be expected to make their own arrangements. This included rough sleepers, and people at risk of rough sleeping regardless of local connection, immigration status, eligibility or priority need. This was in line with the Government's request to councils at the beginning of this crisis.

Officers have provided 216 individuals with hotel provision so far and expected the need to continue up to at least a further 160 individuals. This contract with Travelodge was needed in order to continue to meet need until the Covid-19 situation improves.

Alternative options considered

One alternative option would be to rent rooms in a number of additional smaller hotels. However, this was not desirable because the supply is drying up and it is more expensive and difficult to provide support in a number of additional locations.

Another alternative option would be to convert an existing building to a hostel. However, the lead in time for this would be too long to meet existing need.

Another alternative option would be to not house the single homeless at this time. However, this was not considered to be acceptable.

32. EXEMPT APPENDICES

As per item 31 and the exempt minutes.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date