

Cabinet Member for Community Development

1 November 2017

Name of Cabinet Members:

Cabinet Member for Community Development – Councillor L Bigham

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title: Update report on Grant Award to Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre in April 2016

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) offer advice and support to asylum seekers, refugees and EU migrants. The service supports a range of people in the City, many of whom do not speak English and some who have escaped persecution in their own countries. The Centre aims to prevent homelessness and destitution, helps people to make a positive contribution to the City, supports access to employment opportunities and encourages integration.

The Centre has received funding from Coventry City Council since 2003. In April 2016, Cabinet Member (Community Development, Co-operative and Social Enterprise) approved the award of a two year grant of £387,752 per annum for the period October 2016-September 2018. It was also agreed that a service review is undertaken to ensure alignment of refugee support in the City and that a progress report is submitted 12 months after the grant is awarded.

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member is recommended to:

1. Note the update on the progress of the Refugee and Migrant Centre.
2. Endorse the proposed review of CRMC services, with the findings to be presented in June 2018 and that a notice of 2 months will be served within the existing grant period and a further 1 month be offered as a transition period in the new grant awarded to implement the agreed changes.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

Report submitted on 14th April 2016

Other useful documents:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Update report on Grant Award to Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre in April 2016

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Background

Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) offer advice and support to asylum seekers, refugees and EU migrants. The service supports a range of people in the City, many of whom do not speak English and some who have escaped persecution in their own countries. The Centre aims to prevent homelessness and destitution, helps people make a positive contribution to the City, supports access to employment opportunities work and encourages integration.

The Centre has received funding from Coventry City Council since 2003. In April 2016, Cabinet Member (Community Development, Co-operative and Social Enterprise) approved the award of a two year grant of £387,752 per annum for the period October 2016-September 2018. It was also agreed that a service review is undertaken to ensure alignment of refugee support in the City and that a progress update is brought back to the Cabinet Member (for Community Development) 12 months after the grant is awarded.

2. Update on services since the grant was reviewed

2.1 Current Provision

2.1.1 Services

Coventry City Council currently provides £387,752 funding a year to CRMC to deliver the following services (through the core budget):

Service	Description	Funding
Advice Team	Provides a drop in and appointment service to support refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with any presenting or emergency issues such as access to benefits and housing	£171,227
Safeguarding Unit	Provides casework support to those people who are the most vulnerable and require ongoing support.	£104,608
Housing Unit	Provides up to 40 units of supported accommodation including housing for people with no recourse to public funds. (Part contribution)	£53,338
Work and Wellbeing Unit	Provides a support service to help people into training, employment and voluntary work.	£58,579

In addition, CRMC also receives funding from alternative grants outside of council funding) and their social enterprise ventures. This includes further support for therapy services purchased by GP's (costs for therapists and interpreters), employment support through the Accelerate Project (employability programme for the most disadvantaged funded through BLF and ESF), support for unaccompanied minors, and a pilot project to raise awareness for sexual violence. They aim to generate an income from their social enterprise ventures (interpreting service and cleaning enterprise).

2.2. Key Customer Demographics:

A total number of 2372 people were supported for the period of 2016/17.

- 58% are new referrals to the service of which:
 - 81% were self-referrals, word of mouth or family and friends.
 - 26% were Asylum seekers, 34% were refugees and 26% were EU migrants showing an increase in the proportion of refugees (68%) and EU migrants (108 %) using the service from 14/15. 14% of clients were classed in another category for immigration status.
 - 60% were male and 40% were female.
- 33% of new clients were aged between 18 – 29, 32% aged between 30 – 39, 22% in the 40 – 49 age bracket, 8% aged between 50 – 59. 2% were under 18 and the remaining 3% were over 60.
- The main countries clients came from were Eritrea, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Poland, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Nigeria. CRMC also supports the integration of Syrian Refugees in the city and is one the three partners key to delivering the Syrian Resettlement Scheme in Coventry.
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- People predominantly live in CV1 (25%) and CV6 (26%) postcodes. The remainder of clients reside in CV2 (18%), CV3 (10%) with CV4, CV5, CV7, CV8, CV9, CV10, CV22, CV31 and CV32 making up 7% of clients. 10% of clients have no fixed abode with the remaining 4% categorised as other.
- The main issues customer's required support with were:
 - Home Office and Immigration
 - Benefits
 - Asylum Support
 - Destitution
 - Housing

Note: The number of destitution cases has increased by 109% from 15/16 to 16/17 with numbers increasing from 337 to 704.

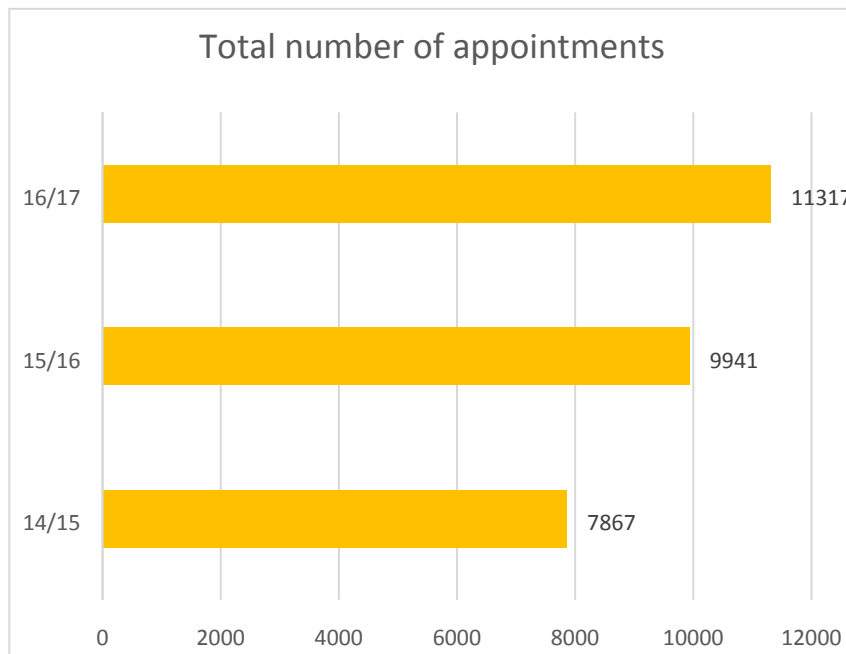
2.3 Staff

As stated in the CRMC Annual Report 2016 the centre has 35 paid members of staff and 87 volunteers who between them speak 60 different languages. The staff are one the key strengths of the organisation.

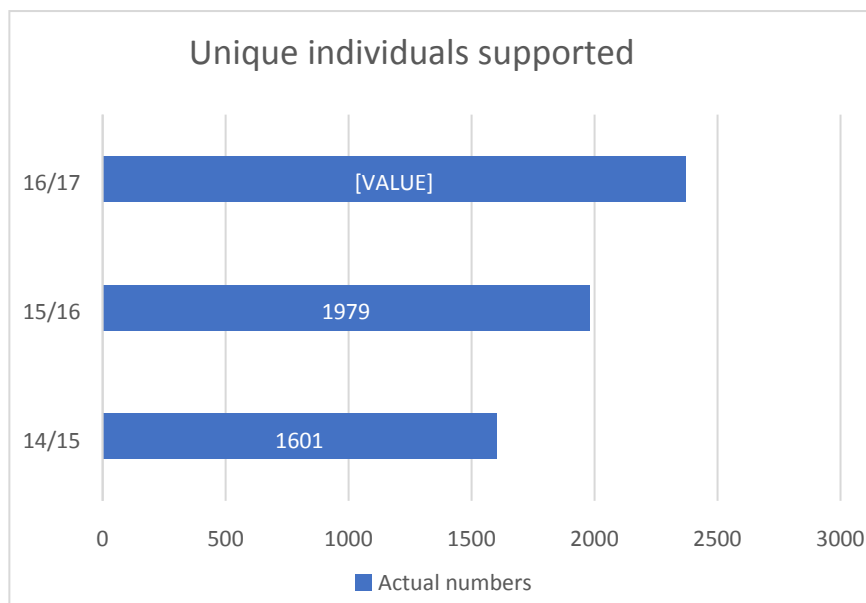
2.4 Levels of Demand:

An analysis of data between the periods 2015/16 – 2016/17 clearly shows an increase in demand for the services.

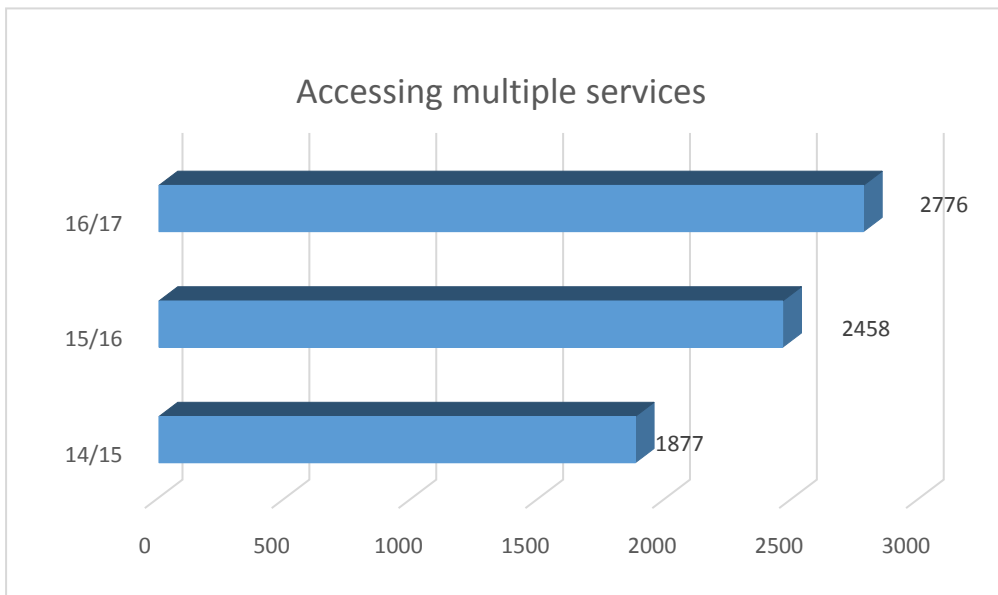
2.4.1 Total Number of appointments: The total number of appointments offered to clients has been increasing over the past 2 years:



2.4.2 Number of individual people supported: The number of individual people supported rose by 24% in 15/16 and 48% 16/17 as compared to 14/15 figures.



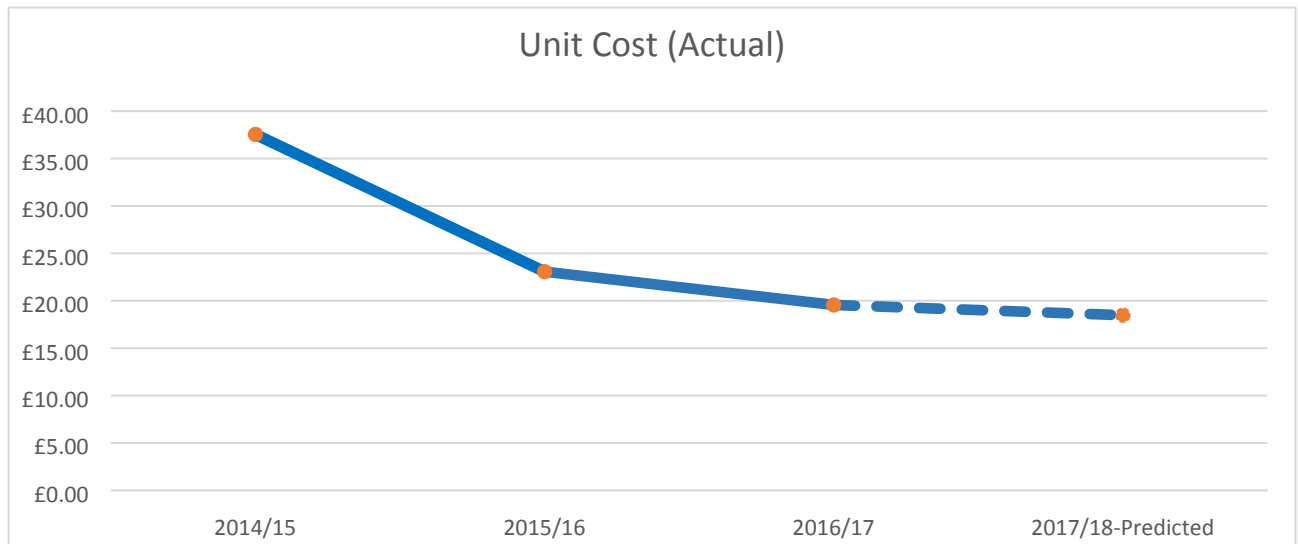
2.4.3 Number of times all units have been accessed by clients: Due to complex needs, some clients may access more than one service, the below graph shows the trend from 2014 -2017.



2.5 Value for Money:

During 2014/15 CRMC worked to decrease their unit costs and achieve greater value for money. A 22% funding reduction was achieved when the grant was renewed in April 2015 leading to loss of management and other posts without any reduction in frontline delivery of services. As part of the service review the organisation achieved cost efficiencies to enable them to increase the number of customers supported for the same amount of funding. In 2016/17 the unit costs further reduced and were lower than the predicted the unit cost.

Year	Annual Funding	Number of Customers Supported
2014/15	£498,155	1877 <i>**This figure was reported as 1455 in error in the last report to the cabinet.</i>
2015/16	£387,752	2458
2016/17	£387,752	2776
2017/18	£387,752	2928 (Predicted)



Note: The unit cost has been calculated by averaging the cost per hour for each service

2.6 Move of premises by Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre

The centre has moved to Norton House in September 2017 that may potentially lead to some funds being released. A recent shadowing exercise undertaken at the centre and looking at the existing budget agreed with the Refugee centre, found that there does not appear to be any training and development funding for the staff. Also the IT technology at the centre will need to be upgraded to give staff the right tools to be able to deliver the services more effectively and efficiently. Any released funding will be discussed with the centre to be used to improve and enhance the resilience of the organisation.

3. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

4.1 Financial Implications

The grant will continue to be funded from within existing Coventry City Council People Directorate budgets at the same levels as agreed until Sept 2018.

4.2 Legal implications

The Council will continue to make the grant payments in accordance with section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

4.3 Other implications

None

5.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Plan)?

This service supports the delivery of the vision and values set out within the Council Plan by protecting and supporting the most vulnerable people, helping to reduce the impact of poverty, preventing homelessness and keeping children and adults safe from harm.

5.2 How is risk being managed?

The recommendations contained in this report will be managed through usual City Council risk management processes. Service monitoring data will be used to review the service to ascertain and shape the future services required for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants within the City.

5.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

5.4 Equalities / EIA

5.4.1 Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre supports a number of people from different communities, religions and ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are escaping persecution from their countries of origin or are destitute. The service therefore has a positive impact for people with protected characteristics.

5.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

5.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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