

Additional Agenda Item

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: Acceleration of the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme

Name of Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 28 June 2021

Report Director: Chief Officer - Communities and Homes

Portfolio: Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications

Ward Relevance: All

Prior Consultation: Portfolio Holder - Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications
Members of SMT

Contact Officer: David Wortley - Community Advice and Support Team Manager

Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: Yes

Report En-Bloc: No

Forward Plan: No

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):
 Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C)
 Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E)
 Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC)
 Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O)
[Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)
 This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

Summary: The Home Office are requesting Local Authorities support the relocation of Afghan interpreters who served on the frontline to relocate to the UK.

Financial Implications:	Although funding is to be provided for accommodation, this is limited to four months. To reduce financial risk to the Council during this period a claim for Universal Credit will be submitted if the family have not sourced employment to be financially self-sufficient.
Risk Management Implications:	There is currently no Afghan community within the Borough to assist with the integration of a family with Rugby and therefore there is a risk of isolation. This will be addressed through support from Warwickshire County Council and creating links with the Afghan community within Coventry. A risk register will be created as part of our response via our implementation plan.
Environmental Implications:	None arising from this report
Legal Implications:	Participation in the scheme remains voluntary and there is not a statutory duty to offer accommodation to families, however in participating in the scheme the Council is able to exercise its power in accordance with the General Power of Competence under s.1 of the Localism Act 2011.
Equality and Diversity:	There are no implications arising from this report, however an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the process of identifying a suitable property for inclusion in the scheme as part of our implementation plan.
Options:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide accommodation for a family within the private rented sector, initially utilising a property from our private sector leased accommodation stock subsequently supporting them to move into accommodation in the private rented sector 2) Provide accommodation initially within our private sector leased accommodation stock with the aim of moving the family into private sector accommodation or social housing, based on the financial circumstances of the family at the end of 12 months 3) Provide accommodation through the use of social housing to assist the family to settle into the local community 4) Not to participate in the provision of accommodation

Recommendation:

- (1) The Council agrees to participate in the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme; and
- (2) the family be accommodated within social housing.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- (3) The government has requested support from local authorities to accelerate the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme.
- (4) Through the use of one unit of social housing, accommodation can be provided with minimal impact on the Council's Housing Waiting List
- (5) The use of social housing will assist the family to integrate into the local community with reduced potential for future disruption.

Additional Agenda Item

Cabinet - 28 June 2021

Acceleration of the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Communities and Homes

Recommendation

- (1) The Council agrees to participate in the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme; and
- (2) the family be accommodated within social housing.

Note: The Chairman has agreed that this item be considered at Cabinet on 28 June as an additional item to ensure the family can be relocated as soon as practicably possible.

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme has been in place since 2013.
- 1.2 It enables all interpreters who served for a year or more continuously on the frontline in Helmand from 1 May 2006 and were made redundant to have the option to apply for relocation to the UK. Those who were dismissed or resigned are not eligible for relocation under this scheme.
- 1.3 The scheme is run in recognition of the commitment and bravery shown by interpreters in supporting UK forces in dangerous and challenging situations.
- 1.4 There is a pressing need to accelerate the pace of relocations to the UK for families currently in Afghanistan who are eligible to participate. This is due to the increased risk to the safety of them and their families of remaining in Afghanistan.
- 1.5 The Home Office are therefore seeking to relocate all those eligible as soon as possible. There are four areas in the UK that have participated in the scheme so far, one being Coventry in our region.
- 1.6 The Home Office are seeking to relocate 1,500 individuals by the end of June, with a total of around 5,000 to be relocated prior to the final withdrawal of UK forces later this year.

2. Participation in the scheme

- 2.1 All Districts and Boroughs in Warwickshire have indicated that they are going to participate in the scheme, and are all proposing to accommodate one family in each area.
- 2.2 The involvement of Rugby Borough Council would be to provide accommodation for one family. This could be provided either through the private rented sector, through the use of our private sector leased

accommodation scheme, or the family could be accommodated directly into social housing.

- 2.3 The use of social housing would be the preferred option. This would enable the Council to identify the most suitable area of the Borough for the family taking into account their additional support needs and the need for them to be integrated into the community. This option would also enable a property to be made available in the shortest possible time, and in this case there is a requirement for families to be relocated prior to the withdrawal of UK forces, currently planned for later this year.
- 2.4 Placing the family into social housing would also enable the family to create connections within the local area and minimise the requirement for a future move which could impact on the continuity of education for children.
- 2.5 Use of private sector accommodation would be based on identifying not only a suitable property but also a landlord willing to enter into a rental agreement with the family.
- 2.6 Use of our private sector leased accommodation stock would be based on a unit of accommodation becoming available.
- 2.7 Warwickshire County Council will be participating in the scheme and will provide the support services for families to enable them to integrate into the local community and assist with education and search activity and personal support as required.

3. Funding

- 3.1 Funding is being made available by the Home Office for the provision of accommodation and support for the first four months.
- 3.2 In addition, due to their immigration status, it is likely to be around three to four months before they can access Universal Credit and they will receive a weekly allowance to cover their living costs. The amount of the allowance will depend on the size and ages of family members.
- 3.3 Although Warwickshire County Council will only receive funding for a support worker for four months, they have stated that the support worker will be available to work with the family for the duration of one year.
- 3.4 In respect of accommodation support, funding will be available to cover; set-up costs (accommodation will need to be furnished), void costs incurred between reserving a property for a family and their arrival, and the payment of accommodation costs (prior to the award of Universal Credit).
- 3.5 All costs are subject to a time limit of four months and a maximum allowance for each element.
- 3.6 The preferred option is to place the family into social housing to minimise costs and financial risk to the Council.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Providing accommodation for one family to be relocated into the Borough from Afghanistan will form part of a joint response from the District, Borough and County Councils of Warwickshire to an urgent request for assistance from the Home Office.

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Date of Meeting: 28 June 2021

Subject Matter: Acceleration of the UK Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation Scheme

Originating Department: Communities and Homes

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A