

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CABINET MEETING OF 6 SEPTEMBER 2021

PUBLIC REPORT: Y / ~~N~~EXEMPT REPORT: ~~Y~~ / N

Report Title	Afghan Local Employed Staff (LES) Relocation Scheme
KEY DECISION	Y
Report Author	Tom Day, Community Partnerships Manager
Purpose of Report	To confirm the Councils intention to support the Governments Afghan Relocation Scheme for Locally Employed Staff.
Reason for Decision	The Government has requested that Harborough District Council consider supporting the scheme
Portfolio (holder)	Cllr Simon Whelband – Cabinet Member for Wellbeing, Communities and Housing
Corporate Priorities	HDC's ' Corporate Plan 2019-2021 ' and the related 'Corporate Delivery Plan 2019-2021' set out the Council's aspirations for the district over the next three years, what its priorities are and how it will deliver them. This contributes to a key priority: The people: A healthy, inclusive and vibrant community. CO 6 Support vulnerable People of all ages
Financial Implications	<p>The Afghan Relocation Scheme is fully funded by Government. As such there should be no financial implications for the Council.</p> <p>Charnwood BC have confirmed that they will act as a lead for Leicestershire districts and boroughs in the coordination and delivery of support.</p> <p>The funding package for the Afghan Relocation Scheme is for 12 months and is £10,500 per person with additional payments for rent and cash support during the first 4 months or until receipt of benefits. Funding includes an additional payment for ESOL for adults. This funding package was reached with the expectation that families in this cohort will integrate more quickly than families who arrive under UKRS and that the most intensive support is provided in the first few months and not for the full 12 months.</p> <p>The key role of HDC will be to work with partners to identify properties to meet its pledge.</p>
Risk Management Implications	Leicestershire has well established partnership arrangements in place to support relocation and

	resettlement. As such there are no unmitigated risks arising from this report.
Environmental Implications	There are no environmental implications arising from this report.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications arising from this report. As a non-stock holding Council the role of HDC will be to facilitate an appropriate tenancy for Afghan families.
Equality Implications	The scheme protects the human rights of Afghan Locally Employed Staff who have supported the British Forces deployed in Afghanistan. They now risk persecution and death as British Forces withdraw from the country.
Data Protection Implications	The arrival date and details of refugee families will be kept confidential.
Consultation	Consultation has been carried out with the Leader and Portfolio Holder.
Options	Do nothing. This option was discounted from the start and would be a reputational risk for the Council.
Background Papers	N/A
Recommendation	<p>That Cabinet support the relocation of a minimum of 2 families from the Afghan Locally Employed Staff scheme.</p> <p>That delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to decide all future pledges in support of Government resettlement schemes following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.</p>

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government has requested that Harborough District Council consider supporting the relocation of Afghan locally employed staff as part of its ongoing commitment.

2.0 Key Facts

- 2.1 On 1st June 2021, the Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace MP, announced that following the decision to begin the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan, the Prime Minister has agreed for the Ministry of Defence, Home Office and MHCLG to rapidly accelerate applications through the policy. ARAP was first introduced to help vulnerable Afghans, who risked their lives supporting British troops, to relocate to the UK and start new lives.
- 2.2 On 3rd June 2021, a letter signed by Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary and Ben Wallace MP addressed to all Local Authority Chief Executives and Leaders seeking support in the accelerated relocation of locally employed staff (LES) who have been supporting the UK forces in Afghanistan.

2.3 The strategy is for approximately 5000 individuals to relocate over the summer months with the aim of all families relocating by 31st August.

2.4 The local authority is responsible for providing a twelve month integration package which includes:

- Reception arrangements upon arrival at the airport including handover from flight escorts and welcome briefing.
- Accommodation.
- A package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare benefits, housing, health, education and utility supply.
- Registration with GPs and local Job Centre Plus including receipt of a National Insurance Number.
- Assistance in securing school places for school aged children.
- Cash support.

2.5 Funding table

Descriptor	Tariff (£)
Integration Support Package (per person for 12 months following arrival)	10,500
ESOL (single payment per adult who requires it)	850
Cash Support** (per person per week up to a maximum of 4 months–if required)	Variable Tariffs*
Rent/Accommodation (per person per day, up to a maximum of 4 months–if required)	£15

*Cash support – limited to a maximum of 4 months

Single (under 25)	Single (25 or over)	Couples	Child (under 18)
£59.20 per week	£74.70 per week	£117.40 per week	£37.75 per week

** These payments are limited to a maximum of 4 months or until the beneficiaries receive mainstream benefits – whichever occurs first.

2.6 This funding package was reached with the expectation that families in this cohort will integrate more quickly than families who arrive under UKRS and that the most intensive support is provided in the first few months and not for the full 12 months.

2.7 It should be noted that new arrivals will not be eligible for benefits until they can satisfy the Habitual Residency Test set by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) which can take up to 3 months, so the local authority provides financial support to those who arrive under the relocation schemes for up to 4 months.

2.8 On 20th August, Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government sent a further letter to Councils announcing a new £5 million housing costs fund to enable Councils to offer a

top-up grant to support Afghan families to meet any rent shortfall where families are impacted by the benefit cap.

- 2.9 Case sizes identified are varied with between 2 and 10 family members in each case but details from the Home Office have stated on average there are 5 individuals in each case. Families will start to arrive on charter flights into commercial airports from mid-July.