

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** Tuesday, 4 January 2022

**Report Title:** Afghan Relocation Programme

**Report By:** Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director Housing and Built Environment

**Key Decision:** Y

**Classification:** Open

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### **Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet approval for the mobilisation of the Afghan LES Relocation Scheme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. To approve the Afghan Locally Employed Staff and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme with a commitment to resettle up to 54 individuals in Hastings across both projects within the next 3 years**
- 2. To approve the Resettlement Employability Programme, funded by the Connecting Hastings and Rother Together (CHART) programme**

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- The Afghan LES Relocation Scheme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme support families who have been displaced by the conflict in Afghanistan to settle in the United Kingdom. A partnership has been established across East Sussex through the existing Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, which will be used to support the new schemes.
- A priority for the programme is to support people to access training and employment. The council has secured additional funding through the CHART programme to provide specialist employability support.

## Introduction

1. The Afghan LES Relocation Scheme was announced in spring 2021. The project aims to resettle Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) who have worked alongside British forces in Afghanistan in the UK, following NATO's decision to withdraw military forces from the region. Nationally, the programme aims to resettle 3,000 people (approximately 600 families) before September. Local authorities are being encouraged to participate in the scheme, by offering to resettle families in their areas.
2. Due to the ongoing unrest in Afghanistan, the government has announced that a separate Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will be launched to support vulnerable people displaced by the conflict. The government indicated the initial target for the scheme would be to resettle 20,000 individuals over the next 3 years, with 5000 individuals resettled in the first year. This would be similar in scale to the commitment made by central government in respect of the Syrian refugees.

## Proposals

3. The local authorities in East Sussex have been working collaboratively to agree an implementation plan for the scheme across the county over the next 3 years. The East Sussex Chief Executives Group have agreed the following targets to resettle families in the area:

Local Authority	Afghan LES Relocation Scheme (up to)	Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme (up to)
Eastbourne	14	40
Hastings	14	40
Lewes	7	40
Rother	14	40
Wealden	7	40
<b>Total number of individuals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>200</b>

4. The rationale being that this target represented 1% of 20,000 government commitment and the population of East Sussex represents 1% of the total population of the UK. This is the same criteria which was used to scope the Syrian Refugee scheme and enables East Sussex to demonstrate to government and the local community that it is ready to play its part in the overall programme proportionate to its population size and available resources.

5. Those arriving through both schemes will be granted immediate Indefinite Leave to Remain. This gives rights to work and benefits and the option to apply for British citizenship. The cross-government Operation Warm Welcome has a focus on supporting new arrivals under these scheme to find work, pursue education and integrate into local communities

### **Partnership Working**

6. A county-wide task and finish group has been formed to oversee the mobilisation of the project. Ongoing governance and performance monitoring for the project will sit with the East Sussex Housing Officers Group.
7. The task and finish group will be responsible for developing a revised protocol for the delivery and a shared approach to landlord incentives. The task and finish group will support the mobilisation of the service across all 5 local authority areas.

### **Accommodation**

8. Given the significant and increasing pressure on housing and homelessness services across the county, it is proposed that accommodation for the scheme should be sourced from the private rented sector and not the social housing sector.
9. The target figure of 54 individuals is subject to the council being able to source accommodation without it unduly impacting upon our wider homelessness responsibilities. Previous refugee programmes have heavily relied upon new sources of accommodation coming forward through a humanitarian desire on behalf of the local people to assist in the resettlement of those fleeing areas of extreme conflict.
10. The council is continuing to develop and extend housing options in the private and social housing sectors for existing local households in housing need and will seek to minimise competing demands for accommodation. New social housing being developed locally is being ringfenced for local households as a means of ensuring that local housing needs receive priority and temporary accommodation usage for homeless households is minimised.
11. This is considered important in respect of community cohesion by avoiding the perception of queue jumping on housing registers by existing communities. The council is seeking to provide settled accommodation for families placed for the scheme and is not intending to deliver temporary accommodation as part of the project.
12. Regular monitoring reports will be submitted to East Sussex Housing Officers Group.

### **Support Services**

13. Support services across East Sussex will be delivered by the existing vulnerable persons resettlement programme team, which is inline with national good practice.
14. The team provide a crucial role in supporting families to integrate into the local community providing advice and support to access housing, health, welfare support and community-based services.
15. The success of any resettlement scheme depends upon good will and full support of the host community and we want to ensure that those resettled are made fully welcome. Our experience with the Syria refugee scheme suggests that this is wholly achievable.

## CHART Resettlement Employability Programme

16. Support to access training and employment is a priority for the programme and key to families successfully integrating within the local community. Through the CHART programme we have secured additional funding to provide specialist employability advice for migrant communities living in Hastings. The project will support at least 90 participants by the end of March 2023, including people resettled through the Afghan and Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme and those approaching the council's homelessness services.
17. The project team are utilising the network of employment support services already created through Live, Work, thrive as well as established organisations working with migrant communities, such as the Links project.
18. The total value of the project is £229,276. Match funding for the project is provided through the Afghan LES and Afghan Citizens Relocation Programme, as set out in the budget projections in paragraph 16.

## Financial Implications

19. The funding arrangements are the same for both Afghan LES Relocation Scheme and Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme. Funding is for a fixed 3-year period, beginning on the date the families arrived. The funding available is set out below:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Local Authority Tariff (per person)	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	£20,520
Education (per child)	Up to £4,500			Up to £4,500
English Language (per adult)	£850			£850
Health (per person)	£2,600			£2,600

20. An indicative budget for the project is set out below. The budget assumes a household size of 7 people (based on information from the Home Office on the average size of households). The project has been profiled for 3 arrivals in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and 2 arrivals in 2023/24. Claims will be submitted to the Home Office on an annual basis.

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	TOTAL
<b>MANAGEMENT &amp; ADMIN COSTS</b>						
CHART	57,319.24	57,319.24				114,638.48
2 x FTE Project Workers and 50% of Project Co-Ordinator salary in 2022/23 and 2023/24						
3 x FTE		102,210.00	104,050.00	131,300.00	133,800.00	471,360.00
(2 FTE Project Works and 1 FTE Project Co-Ordinator) 24/25 & 25/26						
Software	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	50,000.00
	67,319.24	169,529.24	114,050.00	141,300.00	143,800.00	635,998.48
<b>FAMILY EXPENDITURE</b>						
Property	39,900.00	50,700.00	37,400.00	7,200.00	0.00	135,200.00
Transport	2,400.00	2,400.00	1,600.00			6,400.00
Volunteer/ buddy project	10,800.00	21,600.00	28,800.00	18,000.00	7,200.00	86,400.00
Professional Services	44,160.00	69,600.00	80,320.00	42,400.00	16,960.00	253,440.00
Subsistence & One Off expenses	7,470.00	7,470.00	4,980.00			19,920.00
	104,730.00	151,770.00	153,100.00	67,600.00	24,160.00	501,360.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	172,049.24	321,299.24	267,150.00	208,900.00	167,960.00	1,137,358.48
<b>INCOME</b>						
Based on family of 7	-220,500.00	-346,500.00	-357,420.00	-168,420.00	-56,280.00	-1,149,120.00
Co-ordinator salary recharge						
50% of salary and recharges in 2022/23 and 2023/24		-21,825.00	-22,275.00	-45,360.00	-46,170.00	-135,630.00
	-220,500.00	-368,325.00	-379,695.00	-213,780.00	-102,450.00	-1,284,750.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	-48,450.76	-47,025.76	-112,545.00	-4,880.00	65,510.00	-147,391.52

21. The total funding for the project is ring-fenced for the vulnerable persons resettlement programme.
22. Services for the project will be commissioned on a county-wide basis via East Sussex Procurement Hub.

## Risks

23. The table below sets out some of the key risks and mitigations for the service:

Risk	Mitigation
Unable to source suitable accommodation	Across East Sussex, the councils will be developing a consistent approach to landlord incentives, using the grant tariff. The programme will support people to access employment as soon as possible, to enable them to meet their ongoing accommodation costs.
Unable to identify suitable families	The council is working closely with the Home Office to identify suitable families to be placed in Hastings. Unlike the previous programme, many families have already arrived in the UK and are currently placed in

	temporary accommodation.
Families leave during the grant funding period	Arrivals have been profiled over a 3-year period. The council is intending to draw down grant funding for the full 3 years on arrival. If a family leaves the programme the council may consider an additional placement to meet the target and maintain the same level of funding.
Unable to recruit suitable staff	It is intended to mobilise the project using the existing vulnerable persons programme, in line with national good practice.
Families require multi-disciplinary support services	A task and finish group has been formed which includes health, education, mental health and community-based support services to support collaboration with partner services.

## Timetable of Next Steps

24. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Develop county-wide operational protocol	Protocol Agreed	January 2022	Strategic Housing and Projects Manager
Procurement of support services for the project	Services Commissioned	March 2022	Strategic Housing and Projects Manager

## Wards Affected

(All Wards);

## Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 34.1

Have you used relevant project tools? Y

**Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:**

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N

Risk Management	N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	Y
Organisational Consequences	Y
Local People's Views	N
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	Y

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## Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

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## Officer to Contact

Officer: Michael Courts  
Email: [mcourts@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:mcourts@hastings.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01424 451315