



Urgent Executive Decision Taken by Chief Executive

Published on 6 September 2021

Decision: The acquisition of accommodation to facilitate housing need in relation to the *Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) ('the Programme')*

Decision taker: Chief Executive

Decision Date: 1 September 2021

Is decision subject to Call-in? No – this has been waived following consultation with the Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Doug Webb.

Deadline for Call-in: N/A

Is decision exempt? No (the associated background papers are exempt)

Is decision urgent? Yes

Summary

On 20 August 2021 councils were advised of a new LES Housing Costs Fund of £5m to support councils who are finding it difficult sourcing larger properties for families receiving assistance in connection with the Programme.

To support this scheme, the Council has been invited to take 12-month leases of 10 houses that can be used to temporarily house families in relation to the Programme.

The funding package guarantees rental payments until benefits are in place and a new fund will enable LAs to top up rent shortfalls above local housing allowance levels.

Decision

To enter into 12 month full repairing leases for 10 homes from MOD.

Resolved

That the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment be delegated authority to agree terms for leasing 10 homes from MoD (on a temporary 12 month full repairing basis) in support of the Programme.

Reasons for Decision

To provide a positive response to the emerging Afghanistan crisis and central Government's call for help by securing suitable family accommodation for affected families within the Programme.

There is a need to act quickly and get leases in place so that families can begin to settle and receive the necessary wrap around support.

Such a decision is urgent, and cannot be postponed until the next available Executive and call-in due to the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan and to ensure suitable accommodation is provided and affected families are settled as quickly as possible.

Alternative Options Considered

The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Do Nothing – such is the public interest, political will and assistance required by Central Government, doing nothing would be reputationally and morally damaging.

Option 2: Provide an 'in house' solution – the council does not own suitable housing stock of its own and is unable to provide short term tenancies for the reasons outlined in the briefing note.

Conflicts of Interest Declared and Dispensations Granted by Head of Paid Service

None

Background Papers

Exempt - Briefing Note and Cost/Financial modelling

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive