



North Devon Council

Report Date: Council – 20 July 2022

Topic : Afghan Re-settlement Scheme/Afghan Policy

Report by: Service Lead Housing Options & Homelessness

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The MOD has offered 12 units of Service Family Accommodation (SFA) in Chivenor for sole use under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). The Secretary of State for Defence directed that SFA properties were to be offered up as a surge capacity to enable ARAP families, or those Afghan families with a Defence connection, to leave bridging accommodation.
- 1.2. The Defence connection serves the purposes of security, established Defence affiliations, and the welfare needs of both ARAP families and our service families living in Defence estate communities.
- 1.3. In total the MOD has offered up 550 units of accommodation across the country
- 1.4. The properties will be leased to NDC on a full repair and insurance for a period of 12 months, however this may be extended by the MOD on a case by case basis. The cost to the LA will be £5,000 per unit per year, this cost will begin once a family is in occupation.
- 1.5. New policy has been developed in regards to those Afghans in Bridging hotels who refuse accommodation offers
- 1.6. Notice will be issued to those refusing and a referral made to LA, in the Southwest this will be in athletically order.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To agree to lease out 4 units initially to be monitored over a period of 6/12 months then if agreed a further 4 further units to be leased dependent on availability.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. SW Councils and the Secretary of State have highlighted the joint working that has resulted in this offer from the MOD and encouraging LA to take up this offer to ease the situation of large numbers under the ARAP scheme in bridging hotels.

4. REPORT

- 4.1. Lord Harrington wrote to all LA on the 27th June to highlight the increasing numbers of those fleeing the crisis in Afghanistan ending up in bridging hotels.

- 4.2. Currently there are 12,000 Afghans in bridging hotels, with 10,500 still requiring accommodation offers. It is estimated that this will require in access of 2,000 additional properties
- 4.3. It is estimated that there are currently 400 in hotels across the South west
- 4.4. As of the 13th June the scheme had fewer than 100 properties
- 4.5. Arrivals under the ARAP scheme are continuing with up to 500 per month, 2000 under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS pathway 2) are expected and also a further 1,500 arrivals under the ACRS (pathway 3)
- 4.6. Funding will be available to LA and in NDC perspective this will be via DCC, DCC will take an agreed % of this funding. At this time the funding grant is:
Year 1 - £10,500 per person
Year 2 - £6,400 per person
Year 3 - £4,400 per person
- 4.7. As there has been a large number of refusals of accommodation from those in bridging hotels, the Home office have now advised the following:
 - Residents can refuse first offer only if appropriate reasons
 - Residents who go on to refuse a second more appropriate offer will be issued a notice of 56 days to leave placement
 - A referral will be made to the LA to take a homeless application
 - Still waiting on confirmation as if LA can go on to find applicants Intentionally homeless due to the refusal of suitable, affordable accommodation
 - If at the end of notice period alternative accommodation has not been sourced it will be the responsibility of the LA to supply temporary accommodation
 - Funding will be available to each LA that are having to provide TA for a period of up to 6 mths per household and 3mths wrap around support funding

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Pressure on staffing under the current housing service due to the day to day management of the scheme with both people and property management
- 5.2. Potential impact on the Homeless service as those placed in this accommodation will have full resource to public funds, they will have the right to approach as homeless at any time during the placement and at the end of the lease period.
- 5.3. Lack of affordable suitable accommodation available for these families at the end of the lease period
- 5.4. Lack of temporary accommodation in the NDC area
- 5.5. Lack of external support



6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. Please detail if there are/are not any equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report. If so, please complete the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Summary form available on Insite and email to the Corporate and Community Services Team at equality@northdevon.gov.uk.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are no environmental implications associated with the recommendations contained within this report

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda:

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or – This could be negative impact on the local community due to current housing crisis

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development – Brings empty units back into use however only for this specific resident group

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Article of Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph:

9.2. Referred or delegated power?

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Lord Harrington dated 27th June 2022

1 year Precedent Lease

Letter from Penny Hobam & Sean Palmer DLUC – 9th May 2022

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author confirms that advice has been taken from the following:

Leader – 05/07/2022

Chief Executive – 05/07/2022

Strategy & Resources Committee – 05/07/2022

Head of Service – 27/06/2022

Legal Services – 09/06/2022