

COUNCIL – 14TH SEPTEMBER 2021

ITEM 8 POSITION STATEMENTS

8.1 Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy

Can the Leader confirm how many refugees he anticipates will be assisted by Charnwood and any discussions that have been held by the Council and government and other local authorities and what the outcomes of these were?

The Leader, or his nominee, has produced the following position statement:

Firstly, our thoughts are with the people of Afghanistan and those in the Borough who are affected by recent events, as well as members of our Armed Forces.

The Government has announced two schemes to help resettle Afghan people who have either worked with the British forces or are classed as vulnerable.

Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Relocation Scheme

The Council have confirmed participation in the Afghan LES Relocation Scheme and has already offered to house two families in the private rented sector. The Council have received a number of offers of properties in the private rented sector which are being considered.

Council officers have attended meetings facilitated by the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to understand the requirements of the LES Schemes.

Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme

The second scheme announced by the Government is the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. In the first year, it is expected that 5,000 vulnerable Afghans will be resettled in the UK and that a total of 20,000 will be resettled over a five-year period.

Final details of the scheme have not been released.

Coordination of the Schemes

Charnwood Borough Council are coordinating the resettlement for both the Afghan LES and the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme for Oadby and Wigston, North West Leicestershire, Blaby, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton and Harborough Borough and District Councils, along with Rutland County

Council. As part of this coordination, we will be working with other public sector partners and the voluntary and community sector.

To date pledges have been made to resettle 20 families for the Afghan LES and once we have the details for the Afghan Citizen Scheme, we will coordinate the pledges on behalf of the participating local authorities.

Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) Cross Party Working Group

The role of the existing VPRS Cross Party Working Group will be broadened to include the two Afghan Schemes and the UK Resettlement Scheme. The existing terms of reference will be reviewed by officers to include the Afghan LES Scheme and the Afghan Citizen Scheme.

Whilst we are waiting for the details the Resettlement Services Coordinator will continue to look for suitable and affordable properties in the private rented sector that the Council could offer to assist under the Afghan Citizen Scheme.