

DECISION OF THE LEADER – SEPTEMBER 2021

PARTICIPATION IN THE AFGHAN CITIZENS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (CRS)

Purpose of Decision

To give delegated executive authority to the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing to confirm the Council's participation in the Afghan CRS.

To pledge on behalf of the Council to the provision of one property (one family) in the private rented sector.

Decision

That the following delegated executive authority to be given to the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing with immediate effect:

- To confirm participation in the Afghan CRS.
- To pledge on behalf of the Council to the provision of one property (one family) in the private rented sector.

Reason

To enable Council to confirm participation in the Scheme and the pledge by the 24th September 2021.

Background

In September 2021 the Government announced the Afghan CRS which will provide protection for people at risk identified as in need.

The scheme will prioritise:

- those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law
- vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+)

The Government has committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. We will work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify those we should help. This is in addition to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, which has already settled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK government, and their families.

Anyone who is resettled through the ACRS will receive indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK and will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules.

Prioritisation and referral for resettlement will be in one of three ways:

1. Vulnerable and at risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the UK government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.
2. Secondly, the Government will work with the UNHCR to identify people most at risk and refer them for resettlement, replicating the approach the UK has taken in response to the conflict in Syria.
3. Finally, the Government will work with our international partners in the region to implement a referral process for those inside Afghanistan (where safe passage can be arranged), and for those who have recently fled to countries in the region. This process will likely be affected by the ongoing situation within Afghanistan.

The focus of the Afghan CRS will be on those people who remain in Afghanistan or the region, primarily Afghan nationals although nationals of other countries, for example in mixed nationality families, will also be eligible. Spouses, partners and dependent children under the age of 18 of eligible individuals will be eligible for the scheme. Other family members may be resettled in exceptional circumstances. Unaccompanied children may be offered resettlement where it is determined that resettlement to the UK is in the child's best interest, and they have been identified as eligible for the scheme. Where a child is unaccompanied it may be in the child's best interest to remain in the region, where they are more likely to be reunited with their family.

Participation in the scheme is voluntary.

The Resettlement Services Cross Party Working Group met to consider the scheme and the Council's participation. The recommendation from the Group was that the Council should participate and that a pledge of the provision of one property (one family) in the private rented sector should be made.

Financial Implications

The Afghan CRS is funded by the Home Office at no cost to the Council. The Local Authority will receive the following amount per person resettled over the three years of the Scheme.

Timeframe	Funding per person
Year 1	£10,500.00
Year 2	£6,000.00
Year 3	£4,020.00

Risk Management

No specific risks have been identified in connection with this decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Morgan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Signed:

Councillor Jonathan Morgan, Leader of the Council

Date:

28 September 2021

Officer to Contact:

Alison Simmons
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
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Alison.simmons@charnwood.gov.uk

Key decision:

No

Background papers:

None

DECISION OF THE LEADER – 29th October 2021

Purpose of Decision

To delegate all Executive functions and decision making for a further three-month period from the date of this decision to the Leader of the Council, in accordance with section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000.

Decision

That all Executive functions and decision making be delegated to the Leader for a further period of three months from the date of this decision.

Reason

To enable the Leader of the Council to take Executive decisions that have been considered at informal virtual Cabinet meetings.

Background

Section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) ('the 2000 Act') gives authority to the Leader of the Council to arrange for Executive functions to be discharged by:

- himself or herself;
- the Cabinet;
- another member of the Cabinet;
- a committee of the Cabinet;
- an area committee, or
- an officer of the Council.

Councillor Jonathan Morgan was appointed as Leader of the Council on 21st May 2019 for the Council Term to 2023.

The Council's Constitution requires that any decision to change the allocation of Executive functions is reported for information to the next available meeting of the Council.

Background

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 expired on 6th May 2021. Primary legislation is required to allow local authority "meetings" under the 1972 Act to take place remotely.

Where it is not possible to convene a face to face in person meeting then Cabinet will meet informally via virtual meetings. In such circumstances it is necessary for Executive decisions to be delegated to the Leader, as Executive decisions cannot lawfully be made at any virtual Cabinet meetings.

Under section 9E of the Local Government Act 2000, the Leader of the Council can take all Executive decisions, or they can be taken by Members of the Executive or by officers, to whom Executive powers have been delegated.

The Leader is able to change the scheme of Executive delegations at any time. Chapter 4 (Section 4.5) of the Constitution explains that all Executive decisions which are not delegated to officers, a single Cabinet member or a committee of the Cabinet must be agreed by the Cabinet.

Given that the Cabinet may need to meet informally due to the raising rates of Covid infection in the UK and across Leicestershire it is therefore prudent that Leader decision taken initially on 30th April 2021 and then on 30th October 2021 be extended for a further 3-month period.

It is intended that decision making by the Leader in such situations will be after consultation with other Cabinet members at virtual informal meetings, which will be open to virtual observance by other Councillors and by members of the public, except that members of the public will be excluded when exempt matters are being considered.

Financial Implications

None arising directly from this decision. The financial implications associated with any single executive decisions will be identified in the reports and documents relevant to the delegated decision.

Risk Management

No specific risks have been identified in connection with this decision.



Signed:

Councillor Jonathan Morgan, Leader of the Council

Date: 29th October 2021

Officer to Contact: Karen Widdowson
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Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None