

Report of:	Head of Housing and Partnerships
Contact Officer:	Janet Baldasera
Contact Number:	01543 464317
Portfolio Leader:	Housing, Heritage & Leisure
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Cabinet 05/08/21

Cabinet
5 August 2021
UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter Relocation Scheme

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To confirm the Council's response to the Government's request for assistance with the acceleration of the UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter Relocation Scheme.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the progress made in respect of Staffordshire's response to the UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter Relocation Scheme.
- 2.2 That Cabinet confirm the participation in the UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter Relocation Scheme.
- 2.3 That Cabinet authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to:
- (i) undertake the rehousing of UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter households within Cannock Chase District Council through one of the housing options set out in 5.7.
 - (ii) determine the Council's future participation within the Staffordshire-wide UK Afghan Locally Employed Interpreter Relocation Scheme.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 The above scheme enables all interpreters who served for a year or more continuously on the frontline in Helmand from 1 May 2006 and were made

redundant the option to apply for relocation to the UK. In line with the plans for the withdrawal of UK troops from Afghanistan, there is a pressing need to accelerate the pace of relocations to the UK for families currently in Afghanistan who are eligible to participate. The Home Office are therefore seeking to relocate all those eligible as soon as possible.

- 3.2 The Home Office have reached out to all local authorities to seek their assistance and are seeking to relocate 1500 individuals by the end of June with a total of approx. 5000 before the final withdrawal of the troops later this year. Strategic Migration Partnerships have been asked to collate any offers of support from local authorities.
- 3.3 This is a funded programme. Integration support to families coming to the UK under the scheme is provided by local authorities through Home Office grant funding. The integration package includes providing accommodation and a package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare benefits, access to health and education.
- 3.4 Due to the acceleration of the scheme it is understood the first flights were in June with regular flights throughout the summer months to the end of August / September to relocate up to 6,000 persons.
- 3.5 The Council took part in the similar, Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme. Two “Lessons Learned” reports were produced as a result of the scheme and whilst some of the features of the scheme differ the Project Teams will need to have regards to the recommendations within these reports where appropriate.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.6 Stoke and Staffordshire have now confirmed to the Home Office an offer of a joint programme, with commitments to participate in the scheme to a level of 15 interpreters or families in the first cohort, with a total of 25 overall across city and county. Whilst an initial offer to support one interpreter and their family has been made it is proposed that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to agree the Council’s future participation in the scheme.
- 3.7 The key role of the Council will be to provide for the rehousing of family within their area. Options include rehousing within the within the Private Rented Sector or by Registered Housing Providers, other stock holding organisations or Council’s housing stock. As further consideration will need to be given to rehousing options following receipt of details of the households to be rehoused it is recommended that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council are authorised to undertake the rehousing of within Cannock Chase District Council through one of the available housing options.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council’s Corporate Priorities as follows:
 - (i) Health & Wellbeing – Supporting Vulnerable People

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The above scheme has been in place since 2013. It enables all interpreters who served for a year or more continuously on the frontline in Helmand from 1 May 2006 and were made redundant the option to apply for relocation to the UK, (those who were dismissed or resigned are not eligible). The scheme is run in recognition of their commitment and bravery shown supporting UK forces in dangerous and challenging situations, whilst the scheme will continue to remain open, in line with the plans for the withdrawal of UK troops from Afghanistan, there is a pressing need to accelerate the pace of relocations to the UK for families currently in Afghanistan who are eligible to participate. The Home Office are therefore seeking to relocate all those eligible as soon as possible. There are four areas in the UK that have participated in the scheme so far, one being Coventry in the region.
- 5.2 Given the need to significantly increase the pace and scale of the scheme, the Home Office have reached out to all local authorities to seek their assistance in supporting the scheme and offer up support to these families. They are seeking to relocate 1500 individuals by the end of June with a total of approx. 5000 before the final withdrawal of the troops later this year. Strategic Migration Partnerships have been asked to collate any offers of support from local authorities.
- 5.3 This is a funded programme. Integration support to families coming to the UK under the scheme is provided by local authorities through Home Office grant funding. The integration package includes providing accommodation and a package of advice and assistance covering employment, welfare benefits, access to health and education. Current funding rates are as follows:

Accommodation				
Set-up and void costs (lump-sum)	Per person rate for families	Per person rate for couples	Per person rate for singles	
	£1250	£1425	£2850	
Rent (up to 4 months)	£15 per person, per day			
1 night hotel accommodation (if needed, dependant on time of arrival)	£50 per person			
Baby pack comprising cot, high chair etc	£225 per any child under two years of age			
Integration				
To provide integration support (lump-sum)	Per person rate for families	Per person rate for couples	Per person rate for singles	
	£4500	£6000	£7500	
Cash support				
Weekly cash support rates (up to 4 months)	Single (under 25)	Single (25 or over)	Couples	Child (under 18)
	£58.90	£74.35	£117.10	£37.75

- 5.4 Due to the acceleration of the scheme it is understood the first flights were in June with regular flights throughout the summer months to the end of August/September to relocate up to 6,000 persons. The Home Office contacted Local Authorities in the West Midlands in late May with a request for offers of support by 28 May 2021.
- 5.5 As in previous relocation schemes such as the Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme Staffordshire have taken a county-wide partnership approach. As a result Staffordshire County Council initially confirmed to the Home Office they would like to make an expression of interest in participating in the programme to resettle the Afghan interpreters employed locally by the British Forces in Afghanistan as a county-wide partnership basis.
- 5.6 Stoke and Staffordshire have now confirmed to the Home Office an offer of a joint programme, with commitments to participate in the scheme to a level of 15 interpreters or families in the first cohort, with a total of 25 overall across city and county. Cannock Chase have made an initial offer to support one interpreter and their family. It is proposed that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to agree the Council's future participation in the scheme.

Next Steps

- 5.7 The key role of the Council will be to provide for the rehousing of family within their area. Options include rehousing within the Private Rented Sector or by Registered Housing Providers, other stock holding organisations or Council's housing stock. Further consideration will need to be given to rehousing options following receipt of details of the family to be rehoused. It is therefore recommended that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council are authorised to undertake the rehousing of within Cannock Chase District Council through one of the available housing options.
- 5.8 The Council took part in the similar, Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme. Two "Lessons Learned" reports were produced as a result of the scheme and whilst some of the features of the scheme differ the Project Teams will need to have regards to the recommendations within these reports where appropriate.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

As this is a funded scheme it is not envisaged that there will be any direct financial implications on the Council with any costs being met by funding income.

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

None

6.4 Risk Management

Ensure that the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) – Lessons Learned reports are reviewed, relevant recommendations are identified and put into practice as necessary.

6.5 Equality & Diversity

None

6.6 Climate Change

None

7 Appendices to the Report

None.

Previous Consideration

None

Background Papers

None