

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker:	Councillor Griffiths
Portfolio	Housing Services
Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:	21/06/22

Title of Decision:	Increase commitment to resettle five families from any of the formal Home Office Afghan relocation schemes.
Part 1 or Part 2 decision:	Part 1
Reason, if Part 2:	

Decision made and reasons:	
<p>That we will increase our previous offer of the agreed four properties to families accepted under the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or British Nationals where they are accepted as part of these schemes – to include a fifth household.</p> <p>This decision is made on the basis that the fifth household is to be resettled in three bedroom private rented sector accommodation made available by the St Peters Church Community, Berkhamsted – providing that this property is let at an affordable rent and is considered to be of a suitable standard for letting.</p>	
Reports considered: (here reference can be made to specific documents)	
Cabinet report 27 July 2021 Officer Decision February 2022	
Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:	
Andrew Williams – Leader of the Council Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Claire Hamilton – Chief Executive Mark Brooks – Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services Natasha Beresford – Assistant Director Strategic Housing	
Deputy Monitoring Officer comments: Resettlement of the Afghan families fall outside the Council’s Housing Allocation Policy and under an agreement with the Home Office. The resettled household will then enter into an agreement with the private sector landlord directly.	
Deputy s151 Officer comments: The Council receives funding from the Government to assist with costs incurred in supporting resettled Afghan families.	
Implications:	A family could be housed from either of the Afghan Resettlement schemes but there would be no detrimental impact of this. The property to be used is a private sector property and therefore does not directly impact other waiting applicants or homeless households.
Risk:	All families accepted onto the Afghan resettlement schemes undertake full assessments by the Home Office and there are no increased risks with this change. The private sector property concerned will be inspected by the Private Sector Housing Team.

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Value for Money:	Both schemes receive the same financial payments
Options Considered and reasons for rejection:	
	
Portfolio Holders Signature:
Date 14 June 2022	

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:
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Date Decision Record Sheet received from Portfolio Holder: 14/06/22	
Date Decision Published: 21/06/22	Decision No:PH-017-22
Date of expiry of call-in period: 28/06/22	
Date any call-in received or decision implemented:	

BACKGROUND

Over the last 12 months, local councils from across the region have been asked to pledge support to take over 800 Afghans under the Afghan resettlement schemes. Since August 2021 the Watermill 'Bridging' Hotel has been utilised for Afghan families for an interim period while they wait for offers of accommodation. All LAs with hotels are providing wraparound support, working with the voluntary and community sector to help resident's access vital health, education and employability support, the situation is becoming increasingly pressured nationally with additional requests from Las to assist and come forward with offers of move on accommodation.

Dacorum had originally pledged to assist 4 households via the resettlement scheme and in February 2022 this decision was varied by way of Officer Decision to include Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) households, the scheme was formally opened on 6 January 2022 and families resettled under this scheme will receive the same rights and financial benefits as the ARAP scheme. This decision enabled the council to resettle an ACRS household directly from the Watermill Hotel in March 2022.

The council were approached with the offer of a private rented three bedroom property to assist in the matching of a family to our committed households. Unfortunately, this offer came after an agreed commitment to utilise a 5 bedroom Registered Provider home to our fourth and final family occupying the Watermill Hotel – three previous households had already been matched at the time of the request. As a result at the time the Strategic Housing Group Manager declined the match and encouraged the property owners to consider registration via the Community Sponsorship Scheme [Apply for community sponsorship - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk). Representatives of the property owners have advised that this route is lengthy and unlikely to bring about a short term resolution, meanwhile the property remains vacant. It is proposed following consultation with Senior Leadership Team and the Portfolio Holder – Housing to vary our commitment to resettle four households to five, on the basis that private rented sector accommodation will be used for a household occupying the Watermill Hotel and with a desire to maintain connections developed in the Berkhamsted area.