



**Oldham**  
Council

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**Report to CABINET**

# **Settled accommodation programme for Afghan and Ukrainian Refugees**

**Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Taylor - Cabinet Member for Housing and Licensing

**Officer Contact:** Paul Clifford, Director of Economy

**Report Author:** Abigail Bailey, Graduate Management Trainee  
**Ext.**

**24 July 2023**

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## **Reason for Decision**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has made £500 million available to local authorities across England to assist with housing refugees who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or living in unsuitable temporary accommodation and who are in the UK under certain specific programmes.

Oldham Council has been allocated grant funding from the £500m which will be used to make 11 properties available in the borough that will be designed to support Ukrainian and Afghan refugees between 2022-24.

This report confirms the allocation of funding and the completion of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and DLUHC. It also seeks approval to enter into a grant agreement with two RPs to contribute to the delivery of these homes.

## **Executive Summary**

The Council have been allocated a portion of a £500 million capital fund to support Local Authorities who are assessed to be facing the greatest challenges in providing move on and settled accommodation for Afghan and Ukrainian refugee cohorts.

Oldham have been identified to be eligible for capital grant funding totaling £1,027,244 from DLUHC. This is not a competitive fund and the Council is expected to use the grant to provide a minimum of 8 homes, in addition to a minimum of 3 larger properties as bridging accommodation relief for the benefit of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

The grant funding will support ongoing delivery of GMCA's wider Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

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## Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Confirms acceptance of the grant form DLUHC.
- Delegates authority to the Director of Economy to agree and enter into grant agreements with two RP Partners (which will incorporate the requirements under the MoU) to deliver the homes, subject to the Subsidy Control regime.
- Delegates authority to the Director of Legal Services to formalise any necessary legal requirements including signing and/or sealing any documentation required to give effect to the recommendations and/or delegations in this report.
- Delegates authority to the Director of Economy and/or their nominee to approve the appointment of external legal advisers required to protect the Council's interests and give effect to the recommendations in this report.

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## Settled accommodation programme for Afghan and Ukrainian Refugees

### 1 Background

- 1.1 The government have recognised that local authorities play an integral role in welcoming and integrating visa scheme arrivals to the UK and accept that this will place additional pressures on existing Council resources.
- 1.2 As a result, the government has introduced further support to help guests from the Ukraine, and those who arrive from Afghanistan to find suitable private rented accommodation, and signposting to mental health providers and charities.
- 1.3 To assist Local Authorities, DLUHC has introduced a £500m capital fund, which fund is to be administered by local authorities. Oldham has been allocated main element funding of £566,400 (Minimum of 8 homes) and a further £460,844 for bridging accommodation (3 larger 4+ bed homes).
- 1.5 The purpose of the fund is to support LAs during the Financial year 2022/23/-2023/24 to obtain and refurbish property in the borough to provide sustainable housing for those unable to secure their own accommodation that have arrived in Oldham under the following schemes: Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, Ukrainian Family Scheme, Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Extension Scheme.
- 1.6 Although it was originally intended that spend would begin in the financial year 2022/2023, the government have indicated that they anticipate the majority of the spend will occur in 2023/2024.

### 2 Current Position

- 2.1 The Council presented the opportunity to deliver the grant scheme to Oldham Strategic Housing Partnership to gauge interest from Registered Partners. The grant prospectus was shared with Registered Provider Partners outlining requirements for both the Main Element and Bridging Element. Both Providers will source properties and provide match funding requirements outlined in the MoU. Properties acquired from the grant will be allocated to eligible cohorts for first lets.
- 2.2 The grant encompasses both funding for the main element fund and bridging element. The total value of the grant is £1,027,244. The Council signed the Memorandum of Understanding between OMBC and DLUHC, committing the Council to develop a delivery plan to allocate funding in March 2023. The Council have identified eligible families that are suitable for the grant scheme.

### 3 Options/Alternatives

The two available options are:

- 3.1 Option 1 – Do not enter into an MoU with DLUHC and do not enter into a grant agreement with two RP Partners. Proceeding with this option would result in the Council being unable to deliver the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) project detailed in this report and increased risk of homelessness for Ukrainian and Afghan refugee cohorts.

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3.2 Option 2 – Enter into an MoU with DLUHC and a grant agreement with two RPs to deliver the LAHF scheme. Taking this approach would enable the Council to continue to support our refugee communities, preventing risk of further homelessness in the borough. The grant will fund 11 properties of both permanent and temporary accommodation placements for eligible cohorts.

#### 4 **Preferred Option**

4.1 Option 2 is the preferred option.

#### 5 **Consultation**

5.1 The Lead Member for Housing has been briefed.

#### 6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 There is no anticipated cost to the Council in the basis that the grant is being passported to partner organisations.

#### 7 **Legal Services Comments**

7.1 Contained within the Part B Report.

#### 8. **Co-operative Agenda**

8.1 The recommended option is supported as it aligns with the Council's Co-Operative agenda. The £500m capital funds will be used to support vulnerable Ukrainian and Afghan refugees needing accommodation and will prevent an increase of homelessness in the borough. Additionally, the proposal will allow the Council to work in partnership with two Registered Providers.

(Mahmuda Khanom, Policy Support Officer)

#### 9 **Human Resources Comments**

9.1 None

#### 10 **Risk Assessments**

10.1 Contained within the Part B Report.

#### 11 **IT Implications**

11.1 None

#### 12 **Property Implications**

12.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report as the Council will not own the properties. (Katy Webster)

#### 13 **Procurement Implications**

13.1 Contained within the Part B Report.

#### 14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

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14.1 None

15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

15.1 This funding is being used to provide accommodation for some of Oldham's most disadvantaged residents.

(Ann-Marie McGinn)

16 **Oldham Impact Assessment Completed?**

16.1 Yes/Corvu

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 Yes

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 NEI-05-23

19 **Background Papers**

19.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act :

File Ref :

Name of File : LAHF

Records held in Housing Strategy Department, Room 310, Civic Centre

Officer Name : Ben Hill/Fiona Carr

Contact No : 0161 770 5261