

Addendum to Temporary Accommodation Purchase Report

Local Authority Housing Fund

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities has just announced a new £500m Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) which will run over financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. This fund has been established to support the longer-term housing needs of the Ukraine resettlement and Afghan resettlement schemes. But with the intention of providing longer-term support to general housing needs once these properties are no longer required for resettlement purposes.

Grant Allocation

Swale has received an allocation of Main element funding of £436,800. With this funding we are expected to provide a minimum of 4 homes for those within the Ukraine resettlement schemes.

The Bridging element of £464,193 in additional funding. With this funding we are expected to provide a minimum of 2 larger 4+ bed home(s) to be allocated to households currently residing in bridging accommodation from the Afghan resettlement schemes.

Match funding is required for both schemes the main element provides 40% of funding, and the bridging element provides 50% of funding towards properties.

The grant is ringfenced and enables local authorities to deliver based on their local need. The basic model assumes stock acquisition. In practice this could include, but is not limited to:

- Refurbishing and/or converting local authority-owned residential or non-residential buildings, including defunct sheltered accommodation;
- Acquiring, refurbishing and/or converting non-local authority owned residential or non-residential buildings, including bringing empty or dilapidated properties back into use;
- Acquiring new build properties 'off-the-shelf', including acquiring and converting shared ownership properties;
- Developing new properties, including developing modular housing on council owned sites, and;
- Working with and supporting other organisations who want to offer accommodation for this cohort.

Resettlement Schemes

Currently we have 122 Ukraine refugees being supported through the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Swale. Data is not collected at a local level for the family and extension scheme. The original premise of the Homes for Ukraine scheme was to be a host for at least 6 months. Some hosts are continuing to support, however other host arrangements are coming to an end. Therefore, finding suitable move on accommodation is challenging and where this is not possible, they are managed

through our homelessness services. Currently we have 5 Ukraine households open to the housing options service and in Temporary Accommodation.

Swale currently has one Afghan household in Swale and two further families from Bridging hotels are being supported to find accommodation through the private rented sector.

Delivery of schemes

As the committee are considering today to purchase temporary accommodation units, there is an option to incorporate this scheme as part of the programme of work.

Main element delivery

The £436,800 from the main element allocation can be utilised to contribute towards the purchase of 4 units as part of the 50 proposed within the TA purchase report, the match funding would be taken from the funding identified within that report. Initial criteria would need to be put in place and accommodation allocated to those Ukraine families that are currently open to the Housing Options Service and therefore would align with the rationale.

Bridging Element delivery

The bridging element of the fund is different as these households are not eligible for our homelessness services. As a local authority we have committed to support this scheme and have been working with the private rented sector to secure accommodation and this has been challenging.

It is therefore proposed that to progress this element of the grant that we work with our local registered providers to purchase and manage the units. Once these properties are no longer required by Afghan families then these properties will go into general stock. The match funding element would need to be identified as it is not currently in the capital programme. Currently, we hold £687k of commuted sums for affordable housing from developer contributions, this could be considered against other priorities for this fund.

Proposal

- To utilise the LAHF main element allocation towards the Temporary Accommodation purchase scheme and allocate 4 of those properties to Ukraine resettlement households that are accessing statutory services.
- To explore with local registered providers provision of the Bridging element properties utilising the grant provided and seeking matching funding.

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