

Decision Report – Key Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/02/04

Decision Date - 15/03/23



Local Authority Housing Fund 2022/23 and 2023/24

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: All

Lead Officer: Chris Hall – Director (SWTC)

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1 Summary / Background

- 1.1** On 21 December 2022 Government issued a Prospectus and Guidance document for a Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). The LAHF is a £500m capital grant fund in financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. The fund is to support selected local authorities in England to obtain and refurbish property to provide sustainable housing (for those unable to secure their own accommodation) who are here under the following schemes: Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (collectively referred to as the Afghan Schemes), Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine, and the Ukraine Extension Scheme (collectively referred to as Ukraine schemes).
- 1.2** The Government has issued provisional capital grant allocations to three of the four current districts in Somerset and required districts to submit a Validation Form by 25 January 2023 indicating the number of additional homes that could be delivered from commencement of the scheme through to November 2023 (although grant is expected to be provided for relevant expenditure incurred by 31 March 2024). Use of funds is not restricted to local authority boundaries. Officers from the four districts and the County Council worked together to identify a viable scheme for Somerset and our responses indicates potential to deliver 31 homes within the requisite timeframe and available funding.
- 1.3** Local authorities that plan to deliver the scheme are required to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) confirming agreed delivery plans and use of capital grant funding.
- 1.4** It is anticipated expenditure for this scheme will fall within 2023/24 financial year. This report asks the Executive to endorse the Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services (S151 Officer) using delegated powers to add £7,500,000 to the Capital Programme Budget in 2023/24 funded from existing

Homes for Ukraine Tariff revenue grant income held plus LAHF capital grant. The investment is not expected to increase the Council's borrowing requirement or require the use of other capital resources.

2 Recommendations

That the Executive:

- 2.1** Agrees to the Councils entering a Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC that commits Somerset Council to deliver the terms of the scheme.
- 2.2** Confirms S24 specific consent for Mendip, Sedgemoor, and Somerset West and Taunton district councils to enter an MOU with DLUHC committing Somerset Council to this capital investment in 2023/24.
- 2.3** Endorses a delegated decision by the Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services (S151 Officer) to add £7.5m to the Capital Programme in 2023/24 to be funded by £3.67m of LAHF capital grant and the match-funding balance from existing Homes for Ukraine tariff revenue grant funds held.
- 2.4** Delegates authority to the Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services (S151 Officer) to determine actual funding of final outturn costs for the scheme, and the allocation of budget, costs and income between General Fund services budget and the Housing Revenue Account in accordance with proper accounting practices.
- 2.5** Delegates the approval of acquisitions and associated works to the Executive Director for Communities where properties are funded by LAHF.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1** To permit District Council officers to enter a MOU with DLUHC for the delivery of additional housing in support of the Ukrainian/Afghan Schemes and secure requisite budget approvals.

4 Other options considered

- 4.1** An alternative option is to reject the offer of capital grant funding on reasonable grounds of deliverability and affordability; and accept the consequences of ongoing pressure on local affordable and social housing provision. This could include, for example, increased homelessness demand and costs.
- 4.2** A third option would be to reduce the ambition of the scheme and reduce the number of units in the programme. However, as match funding is available through grant and demand for affordable homes remains high throughout the County an ambition to maximise the investment is considered appropriate.
- 4.3** A fourth option considered was to use the full LAHF and deliver 56 units of accommodation in line with the Government full allocation. This option is considered unsuitable as the Council has only managed to identify £4m of the

£6.9m which would be required to deliver the full allocation. The Government-set timescales for delivery of the new homes is also a constraint on this option.

5 Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

- 5.1** The initiative will be fully funded through funds/grants provided by government. The scheme will use LAHF and Homes for Ukraine tariff funds.
- 5.2** The Initiative is not requesting new General Fund or HRA borrowing but will need to be added to the 2023/24 Capital Programme to account for the capital expenditure required to deliver the scheme.
- 5.3** The business plans of the council will be adjusted during normal business plan review cycles to reflect changes in property numbers and the impact on income and expenditure.

6 Consultations and co-production

- 6.1** A series of high-level officer meetings have been held between the five councils which will form the new Somerset Council. This included information sharing and discussion with housing and finance leads.
- 6.2** Consultation has taken place with Public Health in relation to the needs and requirements for resettlement of Ukrainian and Afghan and other displaced people.
- 6.3** Registered providers have been approached by each District's Housing Enabling teams to understand their enthusiasm to participate in the Government scheme. The Government is also consulting at the national level separately with Registered Providers (RPs) to encourage participation. Local discussions have identified that RPs tend to have funding allocations from Homes England which need to be met during the LAHF funding period and they are extremely limited in their ability to offer homes within the LAHF timescale.

7 Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1** The initial grant allocations presented to the three districts totals £6.003m, with a target to deliver 56 affordable homes (52 units – up to 3 bedrooms, 4 units – 4+ bedrooms). To deliver this quantum, match funding of at least £6.965m would need to be identified, giving a total potential investment of at least £12.968m.
- 7.2** The grants available have been calculated by government based on average house prices in locations across two types:
 - "Main" units – homes with up to 3 bedrooms, with average anticipated costs in the range £185,000 to £219,950. LAHF Grant can be applied towards 40% of costs up to the total allocation available for the number of properties delivered.
 - "Bridging" units – homes with 4+ bedrooms, with average anticipated costs in the range £335,000 to £398,288. LAHF Grant can be applied towards 50%

of costs up to the total allocation available for the number of properties delivered.

- An additional amount of £20,000 on average per property is also included for refurbishment and other costs required to bring properties into suitable habitable standard. LAHF Grant can be applied towards 100% of costs up to the total allocation available for the number of properties delivered.

7.3 In the time available to respond to DLUHC under this initiative the Council has been able to identify up to £4,000,000 in match funding to support this scheme, using currently uncommitted funds from the local authority Homes for Ukraine tariff grant.

7.4 Officers have assessed the potential to acquire properties that will be suitable and affordable under this scheme and across the three districts have submitted indicative plans to deliver 31 additional homes within the timeframe set within the Prospectus. It is estimated the total capital costs will be £7,439,000 based on the Government's assumption of average costs. The capital grant available at this volume would be £3,668,000 and this would be capped at this level. The match funding for this total investment will be £3,771,000.

7.5 It is proposed to allow a small contingency within the requested budget giving a total budget of £7,500,000. The following table provides a summary of the capital budget requirement and funding plan.

Area:	Number of units		Total Costs £m	Funding	
	Up to 3 Bed	4+ Bed		LAHF Grant £m	LA Match £m
Mendip	7	1	2.098	0.975	1.123
Sedgemoor	6	1	1.585	0.751	0.834
Somerset West and Taunton	14	2	3.756	1.942	1.814
Contingency			0.061	0	0.061
Totals	27	4	7.500	3.668	3.832
	Total Units: 31			Total Funding: £7.5m	

7.6 Costs will need to be accounted for in line with standard and proper accounting practices. Costs and income associated with the provision of social and affordable housing directly by the Council will need to be allocated to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Costs and income attributable to provision of temporary accommodation in line with the Council's homelessness duties will be retained within the General Fund.

7.7 As referred in 7.1 above, the potential total investment if the full target were agreed is approximately £13m. The Council has not yet identified additional match funding of £3m that would be required for this to be affordable. Equally it is not considered achievable to deliver the target number of properties within the limited timescale required in the Prospectus as explained in the Background section of the report below, therefore a balanced response has been made based on affordability and deliverability. Officers will continue to engage with

DLUHC regarding flexibility for the scheme and continue to explore further match funding options.

7.8 Housing development and property management, procurement and legal resources will be required to progress the scheme and complete all necessary due diligence, as well as finance advice and support for financial planning and accounting. These skills and capacity are available within the new council.

7.9 The main financial risks are:

- Costs of the scheme are susceptible to housing market price volatility, and construction supply chain costs particularly in the current high inflation environment.
- Availability of suitable market properties for purchase in appropriate locations.
- Risk of failing to complete the investment within the agreed timescales, with DLUHC seeking acquisitions to be completed by November 2023 and all eligible expenditure incurred by March 2024.
- Ensuring new tenants can sustain Council tenancies.

7.10 Risks will be carefully managed with progress reports to DLUHC required bi-monthly, and with focussed budget monitoring and reporting to ensure financial risks are mitigated.

7.11 Costs will be incurred in 2023/24 however DLUHC are seeking authorities enter MOUs by March 2023. If the requirement is for the districts to enter the MOU, as the recipients of the grant allocations, then it is proposed to provide the districts with S24 specific consent to enter an MOU that commits Somerset Council to delivering the scheme.

7.12 Market factors and the impact of workforce uplift at Hinkley Point C have led to a significant uplift in the price of accommodation for purchase and for private rent. The new council holds duties to some households who are homeless or facing homelessness. The Government has recently extended the duty to house some households which this fund is designed to support. The use of this fund could help manage General Fund homeless duty pressures by introducing new supply through capital investment which will replace insecure and expensive Bed and Breakfast accommodation which can be as high as £1000 per week.

7.13 The County has seen a decline in the number of households wanting to sponsor Ukrainians which means that more individuals who will need temporary accommodation and private/social housing will add further pressures to the Councils homeless service.

8 Legal and HR Implications

8.1 The Council will be required to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DLUHC which will be a formal agreement on the anticipated delivery of

additional housing that meets the needs of the Ukrainian and Afghan Schemes. The timing of signing such agreement is such that the Council is requested to endorse the authority of Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council to enter such MOU. The intent is to work with DLUHC with a view to agreeing a single MOU for Somerset to which all relevant parties can sign up, in the context of LGR and Somerset Council being the local authority taking the scheme forward from 1 April 2023 onwards.

- 8.2** There are no anticipated HR implications arising from this agreement, except that the Council will need to support the prioritisation of staff time to ensure adequate resources are available to implement the proposal and provide on-going support and successful delivery within the requirements of the scheme.

9 Other Implications

- 9.1** The LAHF provides an opportunity to increase the amount of affordable home in the County. However, the client group may be unfamiliar with social housing tenure and skills to sustain a tenancy. The scheme will retain some revenue funding to provide a tenancy sustainment service for the duration of the project.
- 9.2** The LAHF requires the first let of a property to be to a qualifying family. Somerset Council is likely to provide a secure tenancy which will encourage the family to remain in the property as their permanent home and include opportunities such as succession rights. Please note that Afghan families have 'indefinite leave to remain' and Ukrainian families have a limited three year visa. However, when the tenancy ends the accommodation will be retained as affordable housing by the Council without the LAHF fund needing to be repaid to Government.

10 Equalities Implications

- 10.1** The initiative flows from the government role in supporting global efforts to reduce the impact of humanitarian crisis.
- 10.2** Those rehoused under this scheme have been recognised as vulnerable due to fleeing conflict and humanitarian crisis.
- 10.3** The individuals to be rehoused through this initiative will be from Afghanistan or Ukraine but household make up may range from one person to larger families (4 and over). The ages of family members will be from very young to those of retirement age. The health requirements of those to be rehoused will also vary.
- 10.4** The positive relationship between good housing and good health outcomes is well established.
- 10.5** The positive impacts for resettled households would be significant. Protracted periods of displacement leave refugees who experience ill health more at risk of serious illness and can increase the gaps in health outcomes. The involvement

of Public Health in resettlement provides an opportunity to tackle health inequalities and give a voice to refugee populations.

10.6 The ability of resettlement individuals to thrive and integrate relies on access to support.

10.7 The Displaced peoples service will facilitate access to accommodation and support and an assessment of need will be undertaken. Households will have direct support and advice and be directed to local support in the six Welcome Hubs across the County.

10.8 Officers acquiring accommodation for the programme will be briefed in the characteristics of the properties required allowing time to match individuals and families to appropriate new accommodation. The brief will include consideration of location, support networks and facilities, property size, access, and mobility considerations.

10.9 An Equality impact Assessment can be found at Appendix 1.

Any other relevant Implications

10.10 Council will work closely with other service providers, advice agencies, housing organisation and the police to ensure continuing support for the scheme and neighbourhoods in which resettled households will live.

10.11 All homes will be brought up to a lettable standard and receive compliance checks and services in line with the Councils policies and practices.

10.12 All homes will receive investment in line with the Council low carbon strategies and properties acquired will need to achieve energy ratings of EPC C by 2030 and zero carbon by 2050.

11 Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

11.1 The proposed decision has not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

12 Background

12.1 The Government provides several resettlement schemes to play a role in the global response to humanitarian crisis which seek to save lives and offer stability to refugees most in need of protection.

12.2 The Government has several schemes providing accommodation often on a temporary basis throughout the United Kingdom. These temporary periods can be lengthy and the accommodation unsuitable for example bed & breakfast, hostel, or hotel accommodation.

12.3 Afghans housed through government schemes have an 'indefinite leave to remain' and may establish themselves as UK citizens. There is a need to support households who have 'indefinite leave to remain' to find suitable accommodation which may be with relatives, in private sector housing or in

social housing. However, those who qualify for this initiative are most likely to require affordable housing and support for 3 years from arrival.

- 12.4** There are currently 6 resettled Afghan families (including 15 adults and 17 children in the county placed in 3 districts. All cases have arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme, families who were evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021.
- 12.5** There are 1,417 Ukrainian guests who have arrived safely in Somerset through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, hosted by 745 Somerset individuals. SCC has pledged to support a further 10 families (UKRS/ARAP/ACRS) in the next 14 months, 1 ARAP family will be arriving in March 23 and a further 9 (ARAP/ACRS/UKRS) over the course of the 2023/24). These families will be in addition to the Afghan families that will be supported through LAHF.
- 12.6** Most Afghan and Ukrainian refugees are housed in temporary accommodation with Afghan refugees having 'indefinite leave to remain' and Ukrainian refugees having three year visas. These households are located throughout the County however there are locations where the number of households are greater. The greatest number of households are in the Somerset West and Taunton District and particularly around Taunton. Many of these households will have started to create support networks and potentially links to schools, training, and employment.
- 12.7** In December 2022, the Government announced a £650m fund including £500m for Councils in England to acquire housing stock for those fleeing conflict including from Ukraine and Afghanistan and reduce homelessness.
- 12.8** The Government provided a methodology for distributing the money which included a target number of homes by council and a share of the funding based on 40% of the values of the lowest quartile of the housing market, with 50% match funding for larger properties. Mendip DC, Somerset West and Taunton DC and Sedgemoor DC all received an allocation with a combined request of 56 homes and a total programme cost of £12.69m.
- 12.9** The Government requires the councils receiving the funds to match fund at 50% or 60%. A small additional payment of £20k per unit is also paid by Government for refurbishment work.
- 12.10** Somerset Council proposes to match fund the LAHF with £4m Ukrainian refugee Funding already received. This match funding should permit 31 homes to be acquired at a total programme cost of £7.5m.
- 12.11** In delivering the Somerset programme two workstreams will coordinate their activity and share their expertise. The workstreams are People and Property.
- 12.12** The People Team, using the skills and expertise of the Somerset Displaced Peoples service, will look to identify families ready for long term accommodation and ensure the localities and property characteristics are

appropriate. The people theme will utilise some funding for tenancy sustainment work to ensure adequate support to families seeking long term accommodation. This support will be available before, during and after their move.

- 12.13** The Property team, using the skills of the Council's Asset managers both General Fund and Housing (Housing Revenue Account – HRA) will be tasked to acquire homes in locations and with the characteristics identified through the People workstream. The Property theme will have a budget to acquire the 31 homes to the property brief provided. This paper seeks delegated authority to the Executive Director for Communities for LAHF acquisitions.
- 12.14** The workstreams will work together and benefit from a lead officer coordinating the programme under the direction of the Executive Director for Communities.
- 12.15** The coordinator will be responsible for making the best use of the budget, ensure properties are appropriate, ensure properties are let in a timely manner and new homes are dispersed unless there is a community and customer benefit for clustering any purchases.
- 12.16** Providing secure and sustainable affordable homes and accommodation for a wide range of customers is part of the new Council's business as usual. The new Council's housing services let and manage accommodation providing customers from diverse backgrounds with good quality homes in safe neighbourhoods. The new Council directly provides and works with partners to manage its homeless duties and partnerships with Registered Providers are well established throughout the County.
- 12.17** Recent experience included the District Councils responses to the 'Everybody in' directive of Government reinforced that many residents are supportive of initiatives to support the most vulnerable. Indeed, we have seen new partnerships develop in the county with residents actively seeking a greater role and responsibility to support vulnerable households for example Trull Multifaith Group and Citizens Somerset.
- 12.18** However, there is a need to ensure Somerset communities receive timely information, can ask their questions, and receive answers. A community communication strategy will be developed to manage information, promote positive outcomes, and seek to limit concerns.
- 12.19** This LAHF is an opportunity for the Council through its Members and Officers to show its leadership and promote the value and the benefits.
- 12.20** The programme is complementary and will deliver outcomes aligned to Somerset County Council's Refugee Resettlement Pledge 2022/2023 which agreed support to resettle three refugee families in 2022/2023 and five families each year thereafter subject to UK funds being available.

- 12.21** The initiative supports the aims of several high-level Somerset Strategies including Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2028, Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023, Somerset Growth Plan and Somerset Children and Young People Plan.
- 12.22** The programme will support all four Somerset Housing Strategy themes; Housing and Economy, Housing and Health, matching lifelong independent living with appropriate property solutions and housing and society.
- 12.23** The Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy includes complementary priorities to the housing strategy including the provision of adequate affordable housing and enabling specific client groups to access suitable accommodation.
- 12.24** The Somerset Children and Young Peoples Plan places emphasis on the importance of housing for children and families.
- 12.25** Somerset council has an opportunity to use its newly combined resources and expertise to deliver this programme. The districts bring with them expertise in the management and maintenance of homes and supporting vulnerable families through services such as homelessness. The County has insight and expertise in supporting and protecting adult and children, health outcomes and managing property.
- 12.26** The programme offers an early opportunity to use the combined expertise to deliver positive outcomes for Somerset.
- 12.27** The Council's Housing landlord service (funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) offers an alternative host to the General Fund for any acquired properties and the HRA would allow new tenants of the Council to receive a secure tenancy agreement, property maintenance service and tenancy support in line with circa 9000 other Somerset households. The Housing landlord service is a readymade host for any acquired affordable homes.
- 12.28** It is proposed that the decision of which account of the Council should receive costs and income related to this provision – the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account – is delegated to Somerset Council's Executive Director of Resources (S151). The decision will be based on the best business case and application of proper accounting practices with due regard to legislation.

13 Background Papers

- 13.1** The Prospectus is published on the Government website:
<https://delta.communities.gov.uk/document-repository/public/download?uri=/document-repository/Local-Authority-Housing-Fund-Prospectus-Final.pdf>
- 13.2** Somerset Council Refugee Resettlement Pledge 2022/23
[Executive Member Key Decisions RESETTLEMENT Sept 2022.f sign off.docx](#)

Report Sign Off

		Date completed
Legal Implications	Honor Clarke	06/03/23
Governance	Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer	06/03/23
Finance	Jason Vaughan, Director of Finance and Governance	06/03/23
Customer, Digital and Workforce		N/A
Property	Ollie Woodhams	07/03/23
Procurement	Claire Griffiths	17/02/23
Commissioning Development		N/A
Lead Member	Cllr Smith-Roberts, Lead Member for Communities	01/03/23
<u>Consulted on report</u>		
Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Faye Purbrick	01/03/23
Scrutiny Chair	Leigh Redman – Scrutiny Committee Children and Families	01/03/23
	Gwil Wren – Scrutiny Committee Policies and Place	01/03/23
	Rosemary Woods – Scrutiny Committee Adults and Health	01/03/23
	Cllr Bob Filmer, Chair, Joint LGR Committee	01/03/23



Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA, please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Version	1	Date	15/02/2023
Description of what is being impact assessed			
Local Authority Housing Fund 2022/23 and 2023/24 – Supporting the provision of secure long-term housing to displaced refugees from Ukraine and Afghanistan			
Evidence			
<p>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the Office of National Statistics, Somerset Intelligence Partnership, Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA), Staff and/ or area profiles,, should be detailed here</p> <p>Numbers: There are currently 6 resettled families (including 15 adults and 17 children in the county placed in 3 districts. All cases have arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Relocation Scheme, families who were evacuated from Afghanistan in 2021. 1,417 Ukrainian guests have arrived safely in Somerset through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, hosted by 745 Somerset individuals. SCC has pledged to support a further 10 families (UKRS/ARAP/ACRS) in the next 14 months, 1 ARAP family will be arriving in March 23 and a further 9 (ARAP/ACRS/UKRS) over the course of the 2023/24). These families will be in addition to the Afghan families that will be supported through LAHF.</p> <p>Religion and beliefs: All ARAP cases are Muslim Afghani and Ukrainian is largely Orthodox Christian. Language provision includes Pashto, Dari, Ukrainian and Russian.</p>			

Protection Needs: ARAP cases are eligible for resettlement as they served alongside UK armed forces in Afghanistan either as an employee or as a contractor and assessed to be at serious risk. Those resettled through ACRS have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women’s rights, freedom of speech, rule of law, vulnerable people including women and girls at risk and members of minority groups at risk. Referrals may include cases with identified or unidentified disabilities and other specific needs. Ukrainians or an immediate family member of a Ukrainian national residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1 January 2022 and have an eligible Somerset based sponsor. Ukrainians are at liberty to move on from a sponsor into social or private housing or they may be asked to leave a sponsor property putting them at risk of homelessness.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

Limited external consultation has been possible due to the timescales available (by DHLUC) to the authorities to progress this matter to this point. Plans and proposals (to date) have been formed through collaborative working across all 5 Somerset Councils and with exploratory discussions with potential housing providers

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	There is currently legislation in place which means that single people under 35yrs can claim the local housing allowance rate for houses of multiple occupancy only. Because of this, this may limit the ability to provide safe, suitable, and financially sustainable housing for single cases within this cohort. This could potentially lead to the service	☐	☐	☒

	having to not include single cases under age 35 if a solution is not identified.			
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any refugees with disability needs will receive individual support needs as needed Occupational therapist support and Somerset Independent plus will be engaged to support assessments and access to Disabled adaption Grant Thought will need to be given to how accessible accommodation is and can be made to meet the access needs of this community. 	□	⊗	□
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any refugees who have suffered because of gender reassignment will be supported individually with counselling and support from Health. Experienced case workers will also support the integration of the refugee. This will also inform the accommodation offer for this individuals and their families to make sure we have the most successful outcome. 	□	⊗	□
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no identified impacts relating to this decision 	□	⊗	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any pregnant refugees and new mothers will receive individual support as needed. All refugees receive will be registered with their local general practice. 	□	⊗	□

<p>Race and ethnicity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refugees being resettled will all be from a specific background and the scheme will offer refugees a chance of a durable solution to their protracted refugee status. • The continuation of resettlement would help to strengthen the small community network of refugees in the area, contributing social capital to receiving communities, and promoting community cohesion through localised support, integration opportunities, and opportunities to share culture and experiences • Risk of hate crime or racism, which other resettled cases have experienced, and could impact feelings of safety in newly resettled people • Language barriers could impact individuals ability to effectively take part in the process. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the refugees who are resettled may have suffered persecution based on their religious beliefs. The scheme will provide these refugees with an opportunity to re-build their lives in a safe third country. • Potential lack of availability or resource relating to access to places of worship and/or other needs relating to religion or belief (i.e., dietary requirements) could impact a refugee(s) ability to resettle successfully in the area. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any refugees who have suffered because of their sex or gender identity will be supported individually if required with counselling and support from Health. Experienced case workers will also support the integration of the refugee. • Domestic abuse is more likely to be experienced by women. A family in a stressful situation can also be a catalyst for domestic abuse. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any refugees who have suffered because of their sexual orientation will be supported individually with counselling and support from Health. Experienced case workers will also support the integration of the refugee. • LGBTQ cases may be referred to us under UNHCR resettlement criteria and under the Home Office eligibility for minority groups. If LGBTQ cases are placed in areas with existing refugee communities, there may be potential risks to the resettled case and rights to confidentiality. • This will also inform the accommodation offer for this individuals and their families to make sure we have the most successful outcome. 	□	⊗	□
<p>Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases arrive from host countries or from bridging hotels in the UK with limited English and often require interpretation and translation services to access support. Lack of provision could lead to cases not being able to understand or receive a service that they are entitled to. • Cases do not have access to a car when arriving in the UK and may not easily be able to travel to required appointments if placed in rural areas • Some cases may arrive with limited literacy and numeracy skills which could lead to individuals being isolated from UK systems • Community Cohesion - the service is not aware of any cohesion issues linked to refugee resettlement and is experienced at working in partnership with communities and partner agencies to address any issues. • Where incidents of anti-social behaviour, bullying and crime against refugees do occur we will ensure that they receive 	⊗	□	□

	<p>appropriate support. The service is not aware of any cohesion issues linked to refugee resettlement in Somerset and is experienced at working partnership with communities and partner agencies to address any issues. However, nationally incidents have been noted in locations where temporary or permanent accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers have been housed.</p>			
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Negative outcomes action plan
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
<p>Accessibility – There will be greater demand for accommodation than the Council will be able to supply therefore the project will need to create a fair access protocol as a means of identifying qualifying families for the scheme.</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	<p>People Workstream lead</p>	<p>Regular monitoring based on referrals, reporting issues to Equalities Manager. The project will return data to Government as required by the MOU.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Accessibility to the Scheme – Outreach work will continue by the Refugee and Asylum team to help customers become more informed of the scheme.	April 2023	People Workstream	Project KPIs	
Other (Interpretation and Translation): The contract holder for SC’s interpretation and translation services will be contacted when a case is referred to assure that appropriate interpretation and translation support can be accessed in the case’s native language before a placement is agreed.	Provision checked prior to property match/ allocation	People Workstream lead	Provision checked prior to property match/ allocation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (rurality and transport): Development and implementation of property and service provision assessment before approving a case including evaluating local transport routes and accessibility to statutory services before a resettlement location is agreed. The programme will utilise some of the assessments used by Somerset Districts homeless service when identifying the location of properties to ensure facilities and networks are available within reasonable travel time/distance	Provision checked prior to property match/ allocation	People Workstream lead	Provision checked prior to property match/ allocation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (literacy and numeracy) Development and implementation of property and service provision assessment before approving a case. This will include assessments of need and sourcing ESOL/education support at the level of the individual	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
Circumstances of an individual will inform the appropriate accommodation for the individual through the matching process.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

Part of the consideration when purchasing properties will be the accessibility or ability to adapt the property to become more accessible to meet the needs of disabled Refugees.	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

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Completed by:	Chris Brown
Date	15/02/2023
Signed off by:	Chris Hall
Date	01/03/2023
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	Tom Rutland 07/03/2023
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Chris Brown
Review date:	01/11/2023

