

Safer Stronger Communities – Resettlement ACRS & ARAP

Date: 25 August 2022

Report of: Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Over the past 2 years the government introduced the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The scheme offers relocation and assistance to former Locally Employed Staff (LES) in Afghanistan. The offer is based on recognition of service for Afghan citizens who were members of Afghan civil society who supported the UK and international community effort in Afghanistan and vulnerable people, including women, girls and members of minority groups at risk as a result of the changing situation in Afghanistan.

The Safer Stronger Communities Team Resettlement Team has taken the leadership role on the development of the Leeds response which includes accommodation (initially through the bridging hotel and support relating to setting up families in move on, long-term accommodation). Since September 2021 the Resettlement Team have also been managing the wrap-around support within then bridging hotel. This wrap around support includes the operational co-ordination of activities and services through working closely with local stakeholders and other voluntary sector agencies.

The ARAP & ACRS scheme was initially introduced for three months, however it has been extended by the Home Office due to the commitment to relocation additional Afghan citizens over the next 2 years. As a result, a substantial level of funding to local authorities to support with the relocation and assistance in terms of wrap around support.

The Resettlement Team is a small team and as a result of the extension of the scheme, it is no longer sustainable for the team to continue to deliver the service at it's current staffing levels and there is a need to create a number of posts to ensure that the service is maintained and delivered.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment approve the new staffing structure which reflects the additional duties carried out to manage the complex area of work.

What is this report about?

- 1 Since the launch of the ARAP & ACRS schemes, the Resettlement Team within Safer, Stronger Communities Team has developed and coordinated the accommodation offer, activities and services to ensure support for the 142 Afghan citizens who have arrived in Leeds since April 2021. Leeds have also pledged to support an additional 142 citizens in the 2022-2023 financial year.
- 2 The Home Office scheme sees citizens being supported for three years and will pledge to resettle citizens across a three-year period, therefore the scheme will last a total of four years.
- 3 Due to the increased numbers via the 2022/23 pledge the current staffing levels have been reviewed to ensure sufficient resources are available to meet demand.
- 4 The co-ordination of work is very labour intensive, with a significant amount of resource being spent operationally managing the wrap around support and services. In addition, there is an increased demand for a strategic lead liaising with the Home Office, Migration Office, Refugee Council, Housing and various other agencies who support service delivery.
- 5 The table below shows the current staffing structure that supports the 2021/22 arrivals and the proposed structure to meet the increase demands:

Grade	Job Title	Current FTE	Proposed FTE	Variance	Comments
PO6	Resettlement Manager	0.0	1.0	1.0	Regrade of current PO4
PO4	Resettlement Manager	1.0	0.0	-1.0	Regraded to PO6
PO4	Resettlement Project Leader	0.0	1.0	1.0	New post
PO2	Resettlement Project Co-ordinator	0.0	1.0	1.0	New post
SO2	Project Officer	0.0	1.0	1.0	New Post
SO1	Project Liaison Officer	0.0	4.0	4.0	New posts

What impact will this proposal have?

- 6 The proposal will have a significant beneficial impact on the sustained delivery of the ARAP and ACRS scheme within Leeds, ensuring that there is sufficient resource to deal with the co-ordination efforts.
- 7 The proposal will also have significant positive impacts on the staff currently providing this flexible resource, ensuring that they can refocus on other competing priorities and return to a sustainable work life balance, that has been unachievable of since Sept 2021.
- 8 The proposal will have a direct impact on the following posts:
 - a) PO6- The Resettlement Manager post is a regrade of the existing PO4 Resettlement Manager post, this reflects the additional duties the current post holder has been undertaking since 1st January 2022. The post will lead on the strategic and operational delivery of the resettlement programmes to ensure the smooth transition and integration of refugees through the coordination and management of all resettlement activity on behalf of the local authority.

- b) PO4– This a new post which will be responsible for supporting the Resettlement Manager. The post holder will lead on processes that underpin the delivery of resettlement schemes and ensure that project objectives are delivered on time, within budget and to expected levels of quality.
- c) PO2– This new post which will co-ordinate the resettlement service and implement the co-ordinated approach to migration through project activity. The post holder will carry a caseload of complex cases, and collaboratively find solutions.
- d) SO2 x 1 – This new post will assist in the co-ordination of the resettlement service and implement the co-ordinated approach to migration through project activity.
- e) SO2 x 4 fixed contract- The new post holders will provide the wrap around support in the bridging hotel, providing a safe and welcoming environment for refugees ensuring standards are maintained, monitored and that the service meets all statutory and contractual requirements.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

- Health and Wellbeing Inclusive Growth Zero Carbon

9 Consideration has been given to staff in relation to Health and Wellbeing and their work life balance.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

10 Consultation has taken place with Head of Community Relations and Cohesion and Resettlement Manager and staff that are currently supporting the co-ordination activities.

What are the resource implications?

- 11 The ARAP & ACRS are Home Office grant funded schemes and a breakdown of the expected income and expenditure is included at appendix 1.
- 12 The breakdown shows that all proposed changes can be funded through the grant award.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

13 Risks associated with delivering the requirements of the service have been identified, and the new posts will seek to mitigate these risks through an effective team performance and accountability framework, which will be monitored on a regular basis.

What are the legal implications?

14 The recommendations within this paper are not subject to Call In as they are within the delegated authority of the Director of Communities, Housing & Environments.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

15 It was considered to remain providing co-ordination of operational activities within the current arrangements however, concern was raised from management and staff currently within this arrangement that service demand levels (which will be increasing over the next year) significantly outweighed the resources currently available and was leading to high levels of stress and potential for all staff to experience burn out.

How will success be measured?

16 Success will be measured by the implementation of a team performance and accountability framework and the subsequent monitoring of the agreed key performance indicators.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

17

Action	Week Commencing
Share proposal with unions	18 th September 2022
Feedback from unions	26 th September 2022
Share proposal with staff	TBC
Feedback from staff	TBC
Assimilation to new posts	TBC

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Budget Workings for Proposed ACRS, ARAP & Hotel Wraparound
- EDCI

Background papers

- None