

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
RECORD OF DECISION

Date Of Decision:	11 th March 2023
Title:	Local Authority Housing Fund Resettlement Programme
Is this a “Key Decision”?	Yes
Purpose:	<p>To seek approval/decision for:</p> <p>a) the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>b) the proposal that the approach to acquiring properties through the LAHF programme will be either wholly or with the majority of units being purchased by Registered Provider partners with any ‘gap’ in meeting the target for delivery to be achieved through additional council homes acquisitions through the Housing Revenue Account.</p>
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Adam Brown
Decision Maker:	Cllr Jonathan Nunn
Consultation and Scrutiny:	<p>A report has been taken to and discussed at Capital Assets Board on 14/02/23 – this meeting includes Cllr Daniel Lister and Cllr Malcolm Longley. A further meeting has taken place to discuss the report prior to informal cabinet including Cllr Adam Brown, Cllr Malcolm Longley and Cllr Jonathan Nunn. Cllr David Smith as Portfolio Holder for the Resettlement agenda is also informed on the report/proposals.</p> <p>The outcome of these meetings was:</p> <p>a) there is support for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>b) Supports the proposal that the properties acquired through LAHF programme will be a combination of units purchased by Registered Provider partners with the remainder of units being new council homes acquired through the Housing Revenue Account.</p>
Officer Recommendations:	<p>Officer recommendation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To participate in the LAHF and enter into the relevant agreements/MoU with DLUHC. The additional homes provided through the programme will help mitigate the impact of homelessness and/or people in unsuitable housing conditions as a result of resettlement activity in West Northants. Also long term the units will provide additional affordable homes to meet general housing needs of West Northants residents. - Delivering all or the majority of the programme through registered provider partners will mean that council and NPH staff resources can focus on:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the ambitious acquisition programme planned for 2023-24 to meet general housing needs, move people out of temporary accommodation or to provide high quality and cost effective temporary accommodation for local resident in acute housing need; and - delivering the new build council house programme and increasing the delivery of affordable housing to meet local housing need. • Should WNC need to acquire properties to meet the programme target, officers should report to EPB/Cabinet and seek a decision on how the borrowing for this element will be covered – either within the existing approved acquisition budget in the HRA for 23/24 or additional borrowing. The appropriate decision making process should be followed dependent on the amount of funding involved e.g. whether a key decision etc.
<p>Decision Taken:</p>	<p>Agreed for the Council to enter into an agreement with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the acquisition of 30 homes during 2023-24 through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) programme.</p> <p>Agreed the approach to the LAHF programme will be acquiring properties either wholly or with the majority of units being purchased by Registered Provider partners with any ‘gap’ in meeting the target for delivery to be achieved through additional council homes acquisitions through the Housing Revenue Account.</p>
<p>Reasons For Decision:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Not participating in LAHF will mean that the Council will still need to fulfil its homeless duties to households facing homelessness who are resident in West Northants through Afghan and Ukraine resettlement programmes but have no additional short term housing provision to assist managing this pressure. 1.2 Not securing housing provision through the LAHF for refugee households who become homeless will mean the Council may have to provide more expensive nightly-let accommodation for these households creating an additional financial pressure on the council. 1.3 Working with Registered Provider partners to fund the programme will spread risk and provide additional benefits by reducing HRA borrowing and increasing the ability to meet the deadline of acquisitions by 30 November 2023. 1.4 The Council would have nomination rights to these properties to ensure local housing needs are met by this investment in the longer term. There is no loss incurred by the Council working with Registered Provider partners to deliver the scheme. 1.5 The LAHF programme provides an opportunity to support the current resettlement schemes and reduce housing pressure in the short and longer term with the provision of additionality in the social housing stock. 1.6 The hybrid approach involving the combination of the LAHF grant, funding from Registered Provider partners and HRA borrowing to

	will provide the most cost-effective option for delivery of the programme.
Alternative Options Considered (Including Reasons For Rejection):	<p>1.7 WNC do not participate in the LAHF programme which would mean the Council would not be awarded any of the grant funding and we would not have additional properties available as a housing option for the eligible cohort should they be at risk of homelessness. The Council's Resettlement Team has performed well at re-matching guests who have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme when the arrangements with their sponsor breakdown. However, this may not always be possible so to have some properties available for temporary accommodation when this occurs would reduce pressure on both the Council's Resettlement Service and Homelessness service.</p> <p>1.8 The Council could commit only to the Bridging element of the programme, this would help move on families from the 2 Bridging Hotels in West Northamptonshire who are settling in the area, attending schools, gaining employment, participating in community/voluntary work etc. However, this element of the programme does not help the Council to support those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who are living in unsuitable temporary accommodation under the other resettlement schemes.</p> <p>1.9 Committing to delivering a smaller number of properties was also considered. However, the grant funding would be reduced in proportion to the commitment made.</p>
Declarations of interest:	None

Authorised By Relevant Cabinet Member/Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer:



Name: ..Cllr Jonathan Nunn

Date: 11/3/2023