

Housing Committee

☒ Yes ☐ No

08/05/24

From Stephen Llewellyn, Chief Officer (Housing Management)

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In addition the UK Government has requested that Local Authorities agree an indicative number of people they are able to accommodate on a yearly basis through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) as part of the Safe and Legal Routes Cap Consultation. A brief and update is contained within this report and suggested figure for endorsement by Housing Committee.

- (1) Recognise the progress of the resettlement programme.
- (2) Endorse the approach to the resettlement work as described in the report.
- (3) Endorse the North Lanarkshire indicative figure for resettlement through ACRS and UKRS schemes.

Priority	Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
Ambition statement	(19) Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves
Programme of Work	Resilient People

1. Background

- 1.1 The Resettlement Team provides housing, social work support and learning and integration for communities in North Lanarkshire who have arrived as part of the UK Government Resettlement Programmes. This includes the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Resettlement Schemes and the Ukraine Resettlement Scheme. There is an increased focus on learning and integration, employability and community cohesion across all resettled communities.
- 1.2 More recently the Resettlement Team has been working with COSLA and Mears to fulfil the Council's commitment to the Asylum Dispersal programme, including ESOL provision and the renewed request to provide learning and integration support to Afghan's arriving in the UK from Pakistan under the ARAP Scheme. In addition, there has been an increase in requests for support from the resettled families who have arrived through the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO) Scheme.
- 1.3 The UK Government via COSLA has requested that Local Authorities provide a commitment to future resettlement of people through the UKRS and ACRS schemes. COSLA and LA Leaders submitted a proposal to have a collective figure for Scotland that could be allocated on a pro-rata basis similar to that used with previous resettlement schemes. The UK Government has requested that each LA submits an individual indicative number of people it can accommodate on a yearly basis. This is addressed further at 2.11 below.

2. Report

Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme / Homes for Ukraine

- 2.1 The number of Ukrainians living in North Lanarkshire in various arrangements remains steady at around 550. There is less movement than before in terms of new hosting arrangements, but numbers can fluctuate slightly due to families leaving the area and with new families moving in to either properties or hosting arrangements.

Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPE)

- 2.2 The UPE provides a new route for Ukrainians who are here with permission under one of the existing Ukraine schemes to apply for a further 18 months permission to stay in the UK on expiry of their current visa. The period of extension will offer the same rights and entitlements to work, benefits, healthcare and education that Ukrainian's currently benefit from. Eligible Minors will be able to apply.
- 2.3 Applications will open from early 2025 and will be open to those holding or having held permission to remain under Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme, the Ukraine Family scheme and the Ukraine Extension scheme. Applicants may need to evidence that they have made the UK their main place of residence. Individuals will be able to apply within the last three months of their existing visa.

Matching Process

- 2.4 There are 52 Ukrainian people being hosted across 26 hosting arrangements in North Lanarkshire. The majority of these are long standing hosting arrangements and where necessary the Resettlement Team continue to work closely with hosts and guests to support next steps into their own accommodation.

- 2.5 In terms of national matching, there have been no new hosting arrangements since the last meeting. However, following the imminent closure of welcome hub hotels, the team has recently begun receiving enquiries from other local authorities (LAs) looking for hosts in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.6 The Resettlement Team has worked closely with Scottish Government to ensure that North Lanarkshire Council's information held on the Warm Scots Welcome app is up to date and accurate. This updated information includes all current and available hosts. Once it goes live, other LAs will be able to access hosting information directly from the app.

High Coats and Birkshaw Towers

- 2.7 The turnover of properties in High Coats is relatively stable. At present 141 flats are occupied and the remaining unoccupied flat has been offered and the move in date is scheduled for late March.
- 2.8 Birkshaw Tower has 52 occupied properties with 3 of the vacant 6 properties being allocated to South Lanarkshire Council as they work towards implementing the Moving On policy from Welcome Hotels. The Resettlement Team work closely with hosts, other LAs and Scottish Government to reallocate the properties in both Towers.

Unaccompanied Minors from Ukraine

- 2.9 There have been 2 further cases of Unaccompanied Minors referred to the team from Scottish Government's Ukraine Safeguarding Team since last reported. All assessments have been completed, and feedback has been provided to the Safeguarding Team. There are 5 cases in North Lanarkshire currently and these are being case managed by Social Workers from the Resettlement Team.

UKRS/ARAP/ACRS

- 2.10 There are 8 Syrian families being supported having arrived in the last 5 years. The latest family to reach their 5 year anniversary (in March 2024) is being supported by the Resettlement Team to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain through the Ethnic Minority Law Centre (EMLC) in Glasgow. The team met with the family and facilitated the completion of the necessary paperwork and sent the documents to the EMLC. The further 7 families will reach their 5-year anniversary In November 2024.
- 2.11 There are four Afghan families currently in North Lanarkshire and they continue to be supported by Resettlement staff. Since arrival, 3 children have been born in Scotland with the latest baby being born in December 2023. The adults continue to attend ESOL and childcare is provided in Bellshill, Airdrie and Coatbridge to enable access for all.

Mears ARAP contract with Ministry of Defence (MoD)

- 2.12 The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is for Afghan citizens who worked for, or with, the UK Government in Afghanistan in exposed or meaningful roles. The policy includes an offer of relocation and resettlement to the UK and the MoD has offered Service Family Accommodation (SFA) properties to ARAP families as part of this, providing them with the best possible start to their settled life in the UK.
- 2.13 Due to the size and composition of many of the remaining ARAP families to be relocated, the Home Office has been unable to match them to SFA and so Mears are sourcing more appropriately sized properties in the private rental sector to cater for

those smaller and larger family sizes. The Resettlement Team is liaising with Mears and the team will provide learning and integration support for Afghan families who will resettle in North Lanarkshire as part of this contract. In total 15 properties will be sourced by Mears for either couples or families. The properties will be in the private sector. To date one property has been secured with a 3-year lease awaiting arrival of the Afghan family.

Hong Kong British National Overseas (BNO)

- 2.14 The Hong Kong British National Overseas (BNO) visa route was launched in 2021. The programme enables the successful applicant and their eligible family members to come to the UK to live, study and work.
- 2.15 There have been increasing numbers of learners from Hong Kong attending CLD ESOL classes. To map out the needs of the community, the team hosted a Chinese New Year event in February. It was attended by over 30 people from across North Lanarkshire. Some of the learners are now actively engaged. They attended the New Scots consultation event and some of them joined the ESOL learner's forum. The team is in contact with the Scottish Government and COSLA to access any additional funding to support the BNO visas holders.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children / National Transfer Scheme

- 2.16 There are 42 UASC young people supported by the team, including 19 over 18's and 23 under 18's. Many of them are living independently. One young person had 3 University offers, others have had their Leave to Remain granted. Eligible young people are seeking employment, taking driving lessons and travel independently.

Asylum Dispersal

- 2.17 As part of a focus of moving asylum seekers from hotels to other accommodation, a national agreement reached by the Home Office, COSLA and Mears in which North Lanarkshire Council was allocated a proportionate number of asylum seekers. The number allocated is 143 people. Mears hold the contract for this programme and have responsibility for providing accommodation, health and education. The Resettlement Team are working closely with Mears to provide ESOL for individuals when they are relocated. To date there have been 5 properties allocated with a total of 17 people including 9 children. The properties are across North Lanarkshire. Mears have indicated that Asylum Dispersal is likely to be a slow process. The Resettlement Team has engaged with the families who have requested ESOL.

Community Learning, Development and Integration

- 2.18 Across North Lanarkshire, 18 core ESOL classes are offered to all resettled adults with an additional 6 classes taking place in Wishaw area for Birkshaw, and Coatbridge area in High Coats. The classes are well attended, and learners are working towards ESOL SQA accreditation.
- 2.19 To meet the demand of the resettled adults seeking employment, CLD ESOL Project Officers delivered 3 targeted employability ESOL programmes in Wishaw, Coatbridge and Cumbernauld with further three employability courses offered in Airdrie, Bellshill and Motherwell. There is also additional ESOL class offered to UASC young people.
- 2.20 Following the success of volunteer learner recruitment, the ESOL Learner Forum continues to thrive. 17 learners from across North Lanarkshire met again in January

2024. The learners were actively involved in shaping the ESOL learning offer and participated in the New Scots Strategy consultation.

- 2.21 From January, three Support Workers have been appointed to further develop and deliver learning and integration opportunities for resettled communities. With Resettlement CLD colleagues they have organised the community consultation events in February. The Support Workers will be replicate the success of the 'Chat Cafe' in High Coats and deliver similar projects in Airdrie, Bellshill and Wishaw.
- 2.22 In February, the CLD Adult Learning and Resettlement team hosted three community consultation events. The events took place in Chapelside Community Centre in Airdrie, Gowkthrapple Community Centre in Wishaw, and Charlotte Toal Community Centre in Coatbridge. The team shared the North Lanarkshire Council 'Our Lives' Research findings with the participants and asked them about their views on the Scottish Government's New Scots strategy. 43 people attended the events and shared their valuable opinions on how to improve national and local services for the refugee community.
- 2.23 A photography project for resettled families continued in partnership with Summerlee's Photo media studio. One outcome of the project will be a photography exhibition reflecting the various dimensions of resettled people's live in North Lanarkshire. The exhibition is expected to take place in Spring 2024. A digital photobook will be produced after the exhibition to ensure legacy, sustainability and to be easily shared with the wider community and partners.
- 2.24 Both junior and senior Connect Youth Groups continue their weekly meets and 9 young people have successfully gained Dynamic Youth awards; the group is currently participating in John Muir awards. The senior group has signed up for the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) awards with 5 of them completing their Bronze Awards. A further 3 of the group are progressing to Silver level. With the support from the Project Officer, 3 of the young people from the senior group successfully gained employment with the 2024 CLD Young Adult Programme. There has been overwhelmingly positive feedback from Social Work in terms of how the Connect Youth Group has supported the UASC young people, especially when they first arrive. It is a group where they can meet other young people who have had similar experiences and a safe space to share.
- 2.25 Ten Ukrainians successfully completed their SCQF level 4 Bronze National Navigation Award with 6 of them are moving on to take the nationally recognised Lowland Leader Award training course in April. The goal is to grow fully competent volunteer leaders to plan and organise health walks in North Lanarkshire and beyond. A great achievement that will open the local countryside for newly resettled community members. Furthermore, the qualification can potentially provide employment opportunities for volunteers.
- 2.26 Working in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council's HR department, the team organised two targeted recruitment workshops for New Scots. The workshops were led by staff from HR and the Council's Workforce Development team. Candidates had the opportunity to find out more about working in Early Years and how to apply for jobs. The process was a great success and 17 candidates secured permanent posts ranging from 10 hours to 27 hours, term time and full time. Future workshops are planned and will be offered to the wider community.

Safe and Legal Routes Cap Consultation

- 2.27 At the end of 2023 COSLA engaged with local authorities on the Home Office consultation on the cap on safe and legal routes and it was decided that a collective response from COSLA on behalf of all local authorities was the preferred way forward, although this did not prevent individual councils from submitting individual responses. This position was endorsed by Leaders and a collective response was submitted along with written representations from COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Cllr Chalmers, to the Home Office Minister, Mr Pursglove.
- 2.28 A response was received in January 2024 and the main points were:
- The government is looking to lay down a statutory instrument (SI) in June 2024 which will set the cap for 2025-2026 and, to meet this deadline, civil servants will need to provide ministers with final numbers of local authority pledges by mid-April. COSLA was asked to provide the Home Office with an indicative response from LAs by early March.
 - Ministers are looking to build in a regular 'review' process into the cap, via SI, to enable the number to be adjusted should local authority capacity increase during any given year.
 - Resettlement pledges will remain voluntary and there is no legislative basis for enforcing these. However, through this process the Home Office is seeking to ensure that there is a recognition of the importance of these commitments and the expectation that LAs will deliver on them.
- 2.29 COSLA proposed that each LA responds with one of the following 3 options:
1. Your council's commitment/figure for resettlement in 2025 which has received political approval or is based on an ongoing/pre-existing commitment:
 2. An indicative commitment/figure which still requires political approval (and the date when this would take place):
 3. Your council will not be in a position to submit a commitment/figure, indicative, approved or ongoing/pre-existing, and the reasons why.
- 2.30 Taking into account current numbers of resettled people in North Lanarkshire and the challenges with regard to housing, health services and education placements, an indicative response was agreed for Option 2 and sent to COSLA on 1st March 2024. A brief is attached at Appendix 1 detailing the current numbers, challenges and future concerns.
- 2.31 North Lanarkshire Council's indicative commitment is a total of 10 properties which, dependant on family / property make up, will be a maximum of 44 people.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Using the Home Office Indicators of Integration Framework, North Lanarkshire Council can evaluate the success of resettlement. Resettled families and individuals have integrated in respect of the 7 indicators including, work, education, housing, health, leisure and language and communication.
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4. Supporting documentation

Appendix 1 – Brief on Safe and Legal Routes Cap Consultation

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'S. Llewellyn', is positioned above the printed name.

Stephen Llewellyn
Chief Officer (Housing Management)

5. Impacts

5.1	Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty
Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
<i>Effective participation within the Resettlement and NTS Scheme and effective support for individuals and families will increase diversity within North Lanarkshire, promote equality and reduce inequalities of outcome for a cohort of adults, families and young people whose circumstances mean they face substantial disadvantage.</i>	
If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5.2	Financial impact
Does the report contain any financial impacts?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
<i>Programmes are funded by SG and the Home Office.</i>	
5.3	HR policy impact
Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
5.4	Legal impact
Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?	
5.5	Data protection impact
Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
5.6	Technology / Digital impact

	<p>Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7</p>	<p>Environmental / Carbon impact</p> <p>Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8</p>	<p>Communications impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.9</p>	<p>Risk impact</p> <p>Is there a risk impact?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10</p>	<p>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</p> <p>Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11</p>	<p>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</p> <p>Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Briefing Note: Resettlement Update

Background

COSLA email dated 16.2.24 updates the events since they responded to the Cap Consultation on behalf of all Scottish LAs with a collective response at the end of December 2023.

In January Cllr Chalmers received a response from the Minister for Legal Migration and COSLA officers have met with Home Office officials to discuss next steps. Some key points to highlight are:

- The government is looking to lay down a statutory instrument (SI) in June 2024 which will set the cap for 2025-2026 and, to meet this deadline, civil servants will need to provide ministers with final numbers of local authority pledges by mid-April. While there will be scope to provide updated information up to early April (if, for instance, local political processes firm up indicative positions), COSLA has been asked to provide the Home Office with an indicative response from LAs by early March.
- Ministers are looking to build in a regular 'review' process into the cap, via SI, to enable the number to be adjusted should local authority capacity increase during any given year. Work is underway to design this, including looking at what processes civil servants might need to use to amend the cap. Any amendments to the cap would require secondary legislation.
- Resettlement pledges will remain voluntary and there is no legislative basis for enforcing these. However, through this process the Home Office is seeking to ensure that there is a recognition of the importance of these commitments and the expectation that LAs will deliver on them.

COSLA also discussed the possibility of a collective figure/commitment from Scotland based on a proportional share of the UK's total pledges. However, Home Office require a breakdown of commitments per local authority to ensure the cap accurately reflects capacity.

COSLA will continue to engage with officials about the possibility of a regional commitment from Scotland, however, to enable COSLA to provide an indicative response by early March, **they would ask that each local authority responds e-mail to confirm their position by Friday March 1st based on the following options:**

4. **NLC's commitment/figure for resettlement in 2025 which has received political approval or is based on an ongoing/pre-existing commitment:**
5. **An indicative commitment/figure which still requires political approval (and the date when this would take place):**
6. **NLC will not be in a position to submit a commitment/figure, indicative, approved or ongoing/pre-existing, and the reasons why.**

Resettlement in North Lanarkshire

Current numbers across all schemes:

Programme	No. of adults: 18 and over	No. of children	No. of NLC properties inc. RSL	No. other properties	Comments
Ukraine	393	134	192 + 12	32 (hosts)	
UKRS / Syrian	10	112	5		
Afghan ARAP (prior to Mears)	8	13	4		Potentially 15 further properties via ARAP
Asylum Dispersal	9	11		5	Total 143 people agreed
NTS / UASC	18	25	16 + 3 (children's home)		9 in student accom (Soc Work), remainder in kinship or supported care

626 people in total and 229 social housing properties.

Note: **the cap is for UKRS and ACRS only**. Any arrivals via Ukraine, ARAP, Asylum Dispersal, UASC and future emergency situations will be in addition to the cap.

Total Syrian (now UKRS) originally agreed was 180 people. This resulted in 154 people (43 families) settling in North Lanarkshire. ARAP – 24 people (5 families arrived). This was in a period from 2015 – 2022.

ARAP (Mears on behalf of MOD) – Mears are currently sourcing properties in North Lanarkshire to accommodate Afghan nationals who are at present in Pakistan. Met with Mears, MOD and COSLA to determine the process and confirm North Lanarkshire's position on HMOs. Mears have 7 properties at the stage of offer accepted or audit. One property has been leased prior to our meeting, this is in Airdrie and is a 1-bedroom property. Merrystone House has been removed from process. Mears and MOD will take information from NLC into account for future properties and locations.

Challenges

The resettlement of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people has proved successful in North Lanarkshire with good quality housing, employment, education and community learning and building of new integrated communities. However, this has also proved challenging for internal and external services and there is potential for pressure in the future:

Housing: Several factors to consider in relation to future housing capacity:

- ARAP – MOD are unable to give details of the numbers expected to be re-located to North Lanarkshire but have suggested a maximum of 15 properties. Lease will be for a period of 3 years after which time the individual / family can remain in the property and be responsible for full rent (MOD will meet the shortfall until then). This may result in increased applications for social housing.
- Asylum Dispersal – mainly families arriving in North Lanarkshire so far. Negative decision will result in notice to quit; however, this normally leads to an appeal and Mears will put them

back into the system. Once positive decision made, the family will be given notice to quit. Likely to result in application for social housing.

- Ukraine – although currently Ukrainians cannot apply for Leave to Remain, no decision has been made yet about what will happen when extended visas expire. Ukrainians can apply for visas, etc through normal routes.
- Currently 66 people in 32 hosting arrangements who can potentially be looking for social housing in the future.

Education: In addition to the pressure on early years and school placements required by the resettled communities, there is a limited resource to provide support for English as an Additional Language (EAL). EAL support is often required throughout the education journey and is not fully funded for extended duration through current funding.

Health: With the NHS already under pressure, resources had to be redeployed, especially at the start of the Ukraine resettlement programme. The large number of people who settled in Coatbridge were split across 8 different GP practices due to existing capacity issues. This has created pressure on dental practices and some people have struggled to secure an NHS dentist.

Community Learning and Development: ESOL provision has increased significantly due to the rising demand. Integration support from the Resettlement Team and locality CLD is an ongoing process that can continue over several years. Additional requests would require the current levels to be maintained if not increased.

Social Work: provides intensive support for the most vulnerable individuals and families. This is mainly for NTS / UASC arrivals however, there are people from all resettlement programmes who are within the caseloads. This will only increase with new arrivals who have spent many years in camps after fleeing war torn countries.

Third Sector Organisation: There is also an increasing demand on local third sector organisations, e.g. there is an increasing number of people accessing services provided by food banks, CAB, Diamonds in the Community.

Funding

UKRS / ACRS - £20,520 per person provided over five years for UKRS arrivals and over three years for Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This will also include the current funding rates for ESOL (£850 per adult) and child education (up to £4,500 per child).