

# Cambridge City Council

## Record of Cabinet Decision

### **Delivery of 4 homes, joint funded through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF Round 4) to meet Temporary Accommodation and Refugee housing need.**

**Decision of: Councillor Bird, Cabinet Member for Housing**

Date of decision: 08/04/2026

Date Published on website: 08/04/2026

Decision Type: Key Decision

Matter for Decision: Urgent approval to deliver longer term humanitarian scheme accommodation through the existing 2022-32 new build housing programme, partly funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

#### **Why the Decision had to be made (and any alternative options):**

The date for formalising the agreement and entering into an Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC falls between Committee Cycles (deadline 10 April 2026).

**Scrutiny Consideration:** The Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee and the opposition spokes were consulted. The Chair made no further comments.

#### **Report:**

See Appendix A

Conflict of interest:

None.

Comments:

The decision will be reported back to Cabinet at the next meeting in July 2026.

## Appendix A

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Council to date has successfully delivered homes across Round 1, 2 and 3 of the Local Authority Housing Fund Programme. This has included delivery of 41 homes, exceeding a combined target of 38 homes across three prior rounds of funding.
- 1.2. Following Announcement of a 4<sup>th</sup> Funding Round in late 2025, a positive Expression of Interest was submitted to the LAHF, indicating that the Council were interested in entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for further housing delivery.
- 1.3. This Favourable Expression of Interest is based on the standing commitment from the council to make 4 refugee homes available annually in the City (Ref 25/14/HSC).
- 1.4. An MOU has now been provided to the Council, and confirms a Funding allocation to the Council of
  - 1.4.1. capital grant of £917,425 and
  - 1.4.2. revenue grant of £6,647.
- 1.5. This Grant is allocated on the basis of the Council delivering 4x homes into stock through open market acquisition. These require allocation as:
- 1.6. **2 properties (2-4+ bed)** to be allocated to households that meet the LAHF Temporary Accommodation element eligibility criteria.
- 1.7. **1 properties (2-3 bed)** for households that meet the LAHF R4 resettlement element eligibility criteria.
- 1.8. **1 properties (4+ bed)** for households that meet the LAHF R4 large resettlement element eligibility criteria.
- 1.9. Formal Signing of the MOU is required by **10 April 2026**.
- 1.10. Following the meeting of this need the properties delivered will become general needs housing held within council stock.
- 1.11. This report seeks approval for the delivery of the 4 homes proposed, through an allocated budget to be drawn down from the new homes programme funding built into the HRA BSR. Delivery of these homes into stock is targeted by March 2026, with the LAHF 4 programme running to March 2030.

## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Executive Councillor for Housing:

- 2.1. Delegate Authority to the Section 151 Officer to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to allow for the Round 4 payment of allocated funding to the Council.
- 2.2. Approve that the delivery of accommodation to cater for recent humanitarian schemes identified within this second round of LAHF funding be delivered as part of the Councils 2022-2032 New Build Housing Programme.
- 2.3. Approve that an indicative budget of £2,000,000 be drawn down in 2026/27 from the sum already ear-marked and approved for investment in new homes, to cover the costs associated with delivering 4 homes to serve as longer term accommodation, catering for the eligible cohort as defined in Part 4, and to recognise grant funding of £924,072 towards this expenditure. *Following the meeting of this need the properties delivered will become general needs housing held within council stock.*
- 2.4. Authorise the Acting Chief Property Surveyor to approve the purchase of open market properties into council stock to serve as housing for the eligible cohort as defined in 4.2, subject to consultation with the Director of Communities and the Chief Financial Officer.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) is an innovative capital fund that supports local authorities in England to obtain housing for those who are unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes.
- 3.2. The Council to date has successfully delivered homes across Round 1, 2 and 3 of the Local Authority Housing Fund programme. This has included delivery of 41 homes, exceeding a combined target of 38 homes across three prior rounds of funding
- 3.3. As was the case in Round 3, total funding is not allocated per property element, but rather is fungible across all home delivery and is a bulk funding allocation

contingent only on the delivery of the 4 homes which will address the eligibility criteria set out in Paragraph 5.

- 3.4. The funding amounts to £917,425.00. There is also an additional allocation of £76,647 of revenue funding to support delivery, which will be drawn down in line with officer costs.
- 3.5. The MoU targets delivery of the 4 homes by March 2027. The Round 4 programme has an extended duration but delivery in the 2026/27 year aligns with current council commitments in terms of eligible families for housing.
- 3.6. In terms of budget allocations, match funding can be drawn from the budget allocated for new housing delivery as set out in the in the HRA budget Setting Report
- 3.7. Should we successfully deliver well ahead of the target dates, it has been indicated that LAHF may be open to considering additional funding, subject to delivery progress by other selected authorities. We would remain open to this consideration, subject to Council commitments and housing need.

#### **4. Eligible Cohort**

- 4.1. **LAHF R4 resettlement properties** are intended to provide sustainable settled housing for those who:
  - 4.1.1. are on the Afghan Resettlement Programme (ARP); and,
  - 4.1.2. have not already moved into settled accommodation or received an offer of accommodation under the one allocation policy as set out in the ARP policy guidance.
- 4.2. **TA element properties** are intended to help address general local homelessness needs. They are for any household owed a homelessness duty by the local authority. This could include ARP arrivals but there is no requirement for this.

#### **5. Temporary Accommodation**

- 5.1. In recent years, the Council has tended to open in the region of 260 homelessness prevention cases a year.
- 5.2. In 2024/25 280 prevention cases were opened. The number of households currently in temporary accommodation stands at 160;137 in our TA stock and 23 in bed and breakfast.

## **6. Afghan Resettlement programme**

- 6.1. the Councils in 2021 Approved a commitment to provide a minimum of 4 homes per year to end-2024.
- 6.2. Further to this, a November 2023 consultation response to Government reaffirmed the pledge to provide a minimum of 4 Council homes for refugees in the 2025 calendar year, specifically noting the potential for more homes if further LAHF rounds are made available (which it now has).
- 6.3. On 11 March 2025, the Council reaffirmed these commitments, publicly pledging to support resettlement by providing a minimum of 4 homes per annum for the next 5 years (Ref 25/14/HSC)
- 6.4. As such, the eligible Refugee family groups committed to are more than enough to occupy the 2 homes proposed to be funded through Round 4.
- 6.5. Should these funded homes not be brought forward, the Council would remain with a duty of care to the above eligible cohort and these families would enter onto the housing register

## **7. Corporate Plan**

- 7.1. This proposal directly addresses Priority 2: Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need, as well as Priority 3; Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness

## **8. Consultation, engagement and communication**

- 8.1. Internal cross-team consultation has taken place between Development, Housing and Communities, and Finance teams through the established Project Group which delivered the Rounds 1 -3 of LAHF funded homes.
- 8.2. Councillor engagement will be undertaken in line with the locations of acquisitions as these progress.
- 8.3. Reporting on outcomes will be incorporated into the quarterly reporting on the housing delivery programme.

## **9. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact**

- 9.1. Direct outcomes are
  - Reduction of families on the Housing register
  - Reduction in rough sleeping and homelessness.

- Net increase in Council housing stock

**a) Financial Implications**

- 9.2. The full budget will be drawn down for this project from the existing funds earmarked for new homes in the 10 Year New Homes Programme. A gross budget of £2,000,000 will be re-allocated from existing approved resources for this specific project.
- 9.3. The Council additionally recognises the additional grant income associated with the project.

**b) Staffing Implications**

- 9.4. This project would be managed within existing staffing budgets.

**c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

- 9.5. This proposal is fully covered by the EQIA which accompanied the Pledge to Support the Resettlement of Refugees in March 2025 (Ref 25/14/HSC

**d) Environmental Implications**

- 9.6. This delivery however relies on existing properties within the city, and as such pose no change to existing conditions.
- 9.7. Energy Bills for housing are to tenant account and as such hold no direct implication for the Councils net zero use targets. These properties will however enter into council stock and as such will be incorporated into long term programmes for cyclical maintenance and energy efficiency improvements.

**e) Procurement Implications**

- 9.8. None. Conducted in-house and within existing procured service arrangements.

**f) Legal Implications**

- 9.9. None

**g) Community Safety Implications**

9.10. There are no community safety implications. Cambridge is a welcoming city of sanctuary. Properties for refugees are dispersed across the city to support integration and resettlement support for refugees is provided by the Council.

**h) Consultation and communication considerations**

9.11. Internal cross-team consultation has taken place between the HDA, Housing and Communities, and Finance teams through the established Project Group which delivered the Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of LAHF funded homes.

9.12. Councillor engagement will be undertaken in line with the locations of acquisitions as these progress.

9.13. Reporting on outcomes will be incorporated into the quarterly reporting on the housing delivery programme.

**10. Risks**

Below is a table setting out key risks associated with the project:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
<b>Delivery failure</b> The funding requires best endeavours from the council.	Low	Reputational risk to the council. Repayment of allocated funds.	Target completion of acquisitions well ahead of formal LAHF funding completion date. Open and early communication with LAHF re delays. Rapid delivery through acquisition as opposed to new build reliance Streamlined internal process for acquisitions already established through R1 and R2 delivery.
<b>Failure to complete on Market purchases</b> Significant competitive pressure on market acquisitions.	Low	Delivery Failure	Progress at early stage to ensure ability to meet target date.
<b>Public opposition /Member buy-in</b>	Low	Reputational Risk.	It will be important to engage with the local ward Cllrs early

Significant local housing pressure may lead to negative public opinion of prioritising foreign nationals		Delivery Failure	on to identify opportunities and issues. The full buy-in by national government needs to be relied upon. Council commitment to welcoming refugees.
<b>Exceeding proposed budget</b> due to reliance on open market acquisitions or required increased purchase value for market homes	Low	Additional HRA funding required	Approach to acquisitions now informed by learning from prior funding rounds  Strategic approach to property selection, ensuring Value for Money on completed acquisitions.

## 11. Background Papers:

- **23/Urgency/HSC/2** - £500m Local Authority Housing Fund Refugee Scheme – Approval To Deliver Longer Term Humanitarian Scheme Accommodation Through The 22-32 New Build Housing Programme, Partly Funded By Central Government
- **23/Urgency/HSC/12** - Local Authority Housing Fund Refugee Scheme Round 2 – Approval to deliver 2ND round humanitarian scheme accommodation through the 2022-32 new build housing programme, partly funded by Central Government
- **24/45/HSC** - Delivery of Refugee Housing Funded Through the LAHF Round 3
- **21/36/HSC** - Refugee Resettlement – Delivering the pledge to resettle 200 more refugees
- **25/14/HSC** – Pledge to Support the Resettlement of Refugees

## 12. Appendices

1. Draft MOU for LAHF R4

### Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Jaques van der Vyver, Housing Development Agency Programme Manager, tel: 01223 - 457928, email: [jaques.vandervyver@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:jaques.vandervyver@cambridge.gov.uk).