

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health
Date:	21 October 2021
Title:	Refugee Resettlement and Support Contract Extension
Report From:	Director of Adults' Health and Care

Contact name: Stephen White

Tel: 0370 779 3186

Email: Stephen.white@hants.gov.uk

1. The decision:

- 1.1 That the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health give approval to modify the Refugee Resettlement and support service contract by extending it as outlined in the report, for a period of 9 months to end November 2022.
- 1.2 That the Executive Member for Adult Services and Public Health approves the associated spend of up to £354,424 which would take the aggregated contract value between 2018 to 2022 up to a maximum of £1,352,924.

2. Reasons for the Decision.

- 2.1 The existing contract commenced in 2018 to provide support to these families. However, following the US withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in August 2021, approval was given to make a modification to the Refugee Resettlement & Support Service contract to accept and extend the support offered further to include up to 22 families entering the UK via the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES) programme. These are families who worked for the UK Government in Afghanistan, including many who worked as interpreters for UK forces in the country, and who are eligible for expedited relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), part of the ALES.
- 2.2 Since then, the progress of evacuation from Afghanistan has significantly increased as a result of changes and instability. The Home Office, alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), announced changes to both the funding arrangements and rights and status of individuals evacuated under this programme. They also introduced a new Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Therefore, further consideration was given to increase the number of families the Hampshire system would look to support from 22, to 35, and to include the acceptance of individuals relocating under the ACRS programme. The programme is

being delivered in partnership between Hampshire County Council, the 11 district and borough councils as well as the support provider and voluntary sector.

- 2.3 The current support provider contract is due to expire on 28 February 2022. The County Council had prepared and were looking to re-tender the service. However, we could not reasonably foresee the US withdrawal of troops or the pace of change that followed that decision, leading to the increased levels of support needed. Given the high level of uncertainty regarding funding arrangements at this time and specific requirements of the programme, including the Home Office's recent changes to the programme (as outlined above), it is considered that it would not be possible to tender for these services at this time. Delaying a tender process until the UKRS, ARAP and ACRS pathways, and the interactions between them, are better defined as well as waiting until this initial emergency period is concluded, would result in a service that was more able to be fit for the future.
- 2.4 In addition, initial market engagement had taken place which had shown the market is very limited. Early market engagement has led to it being considered that the market is not operationally in a position to be looking to apply for tendered services, due to the current and ongoing emergency response to Afghan resettlement. Due to the short term nature of the proposed modification to this contract, it is further considered that providers are unlikely to wish to tender for a service over this timeframe. The market is aware of the County Councils intention to tender these services in the future.
- 2.5 There is an urgent need to ensure a sufficient level of appropriately trained and suitable staff are available to support families under these programmes and to ensure families can be accepted quickly. In order to progress this recruitment, the current provider is seeking re-assurance of future contractual arrangements to ensure an attractive employment term.
- 2.6 Due to the above reasons there is a need to extend the existing contract, ensuring that it covers all individuals resettling under the existing approved schemes. We are seeking a 9-month extension to take the service through to 30 November 2022 in order to give time for the service to be re-assessed and re-tendered as a whole, securing future funding arrangements and ensuring future services are fit for purpose.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

- 3.1 Due to the urgent need to ensure sufficient level of staff, the uncertainty regarding the current funding arrangements, and the current position of the market, the option to re-tender services at this stage was rejected.
- 3.2 The need to ensure that these services are put on a longer term, sustainable footing once the current uncertainties and initial set up period has settled, meant that the option to extend for a longer period, up to 13 months to align with a new financial year, was also rejected.

4. Conflicts of interest

- 4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None
- 4.2 Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: Not applicable
- 5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.**
- 6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.**
- 7. Statement from the Decision Maker:**

Approved by:

Date:

21 October 2021

**Executive Member for Adult Services and Public
Health
Councillor Liz Fairhurst**