

Rt Hon Alex Norris MP
Minister for Resettlement
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

CC: Paul Morrison CBE,
Director, Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister for Resettlement,

We write collectively as the Steering Group of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network; a coalition of over 180 councils committed to creating an environment of welcome and inclusion for people fleeing violence and persecution.

Over the years, councils recognised as ‘Councils of Sanctuary’ have developed robust place-based integration policies in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector organisations, building strong delivery infrastructure and capacity both within local authorities and across our communities. Councils in our network have been crucial to supporting Government’s efforts to resettle approximately 37,950 and are committed to fulfilling pledges and welcome the remaining circa 10,000 eligible individuals.

Our system-wide approaches to integration have been enabled and sustained by central government funding through Resettlement and related government schemes. Maintaining this delivery infrastructure is critical to fulfilling existing commitments to eligible Afghan nationals and will be essential to ensuring an orderly transition to a community sponsorship model and responding positively to Government commitments set out in the *Protecting What Matters* Action Plan.

However, our members have increasingly reported instances where Afghan individuals and families matched to properties have not arrived due to geopolitical and transit-related constraints, leaving properties unoccupied. At the same time, disruption across the Resettlement pipeline is creating funding gaps that risk forcing councils to reduce staffing and withdraw commissioned services, undermining established delivery capacity. The erosion of this capacity will materially constrain councils’ ability to respond to future government asks when arrivals eventually resume.

We welcome the Government’s recent update on the ARP self-move model, including its recognition of lower and less predictable inflows and the challenges this presents for workforce

planning and the management of void properties, as well as its commitment to increased engagement with Local Authorities.

We would welcome clarity on the following:

- Will the Government consider providing confirmed, multi-year funding settlements, alongside urgent bridging measures to address pipeline-related gaps, in order to sustain resettlement delivery infrastructure, including staffing, commissioned services, and community-based integration support, and enable councils to plan effectively for future Afghan resettlement arrivals;
- Will the Government take steps to sustain local delivery readiness during the transition in resettlement and integration policy, recognising the role of councils in delivering integration services, strengthening social cohesion, and enabling community sponsorship;
- And will Government set out clear timelines and a structured approach to engagement with local authorities to support forward planning and ensure that the objectives set out in *Protecting What Matters* can be effectively deployed at the local level?

Without urgent action, there is a significant risk that the UK's local resettlement and integration infrastructure will erode at precisely the point at which it is needed to deliver on existing commitments and future government priorities.

We remain committed to working in partnership with central government to support safe, effective, and humane resettlement. However, this will require greater clarity, stability, and sustained resources to maintain the local delivery capacity on which successful implementation depends.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further how we can deliver on this commitment through working in partnership.

Yours sincerely,

Helena McGinty

Chair, City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network

