

<b>Report No. TC03221</b> <b>Appendix: D</b> <b>Agenda Item No. 12</b>	<b>Council</b> <b>Date of Meeting: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>
<b>OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report Author: Ade Orchard</b>	<b>Title: Councillor</b>
<b>Subject: Support to Refugees</b>	
<b>Strategic Aim: Work with and in partnership with Rutland County Council and other partner groups</b>	

All council members will have seen the disturbing news in Afghanistan and the plight of those fleeing to safety. Several of those leaving their home country served the UK government by providing interpreter support to UK military personnel, often putting their lives in direct danger and their families at peril of retribution.

The latest news is that Rutland will receive 2 families and they shall be housed in 2 properties at St George's Barracks. Numerous local government and voluntary organisations have made their presence known and are already gearing up to help, some on the back Care4Calais.org charity that has been assisting those crossing from France to the UK. The realistic maximum expected is in the order of 2 families and Council should be aware that at least 1, possibly 2 families from Syria have been housed in Oakham under refugee status.

Whilst there is no doubt that lots of help and assistance will be provided to those arriving to Rutland, the lived experience of those supporting these charities is that it is often those *immediate* and *necessary* items that are not available from donations, or that bureaucracy slows the process down. A small, pre-agreed, per-household sum from OTC would enable those supporting the families currently arriving – and indeed other families in the future – to purchase essential items not available, to be managed by The Clerk. Such a gesture is both practical and would show those whose lives have been turned upside down that Oakham is a caring, welcoming community and is ready to step in during those first chaotic weeks arriving in a foreign land and to an uncertain future.

Council may wish to time-bound such a grant to around 3 months as social welfare systems should have kicked into place by then.

**Recommendations:**

- a. That a sum of up to £200 per household, or up to £50 per individual if housed in groups, be pre-authorised for use supporting Afghanistan refugees housed in Rutland until the beginning of next Council year in May 2022, nominally the date of the 2022 Annual Meeting, to a maximum of £1000
- b. That a sum of up to £200 per household, or up to £50 per individual if housed in groups, be pre-authorised for use supporting refugees from Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran and Syria housed in Rutland until the beginning of next Council year in May 2022, nominally the date of the 2022 Annual Meeting, to a maximum of £1000