
Report of Urgent Action: Regulation 19

- 1** Under regulation 19 of the The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 the County Council is required to receive a report from the Leader on any decisions taken under regulation 11. These are key decisions which were not in the Forward Plan and which needed to be taken with less than five clear days' notice. Such urgent decisions can only be taken with the agreement of the relevant scrutiny committee chairman or, in his or her absence, the Chairman of the County Council.
- 2** Such action is avoided wherever possible as it circumvents the normal mechanism for publication of decisions for ensuring that members have the opportunity to comment before decisions are taken.
- 3** However, on occasion this is not possible and the County Council is asked to note the following decision which has been taken by the appropriate decision-maker, in consultation with the relevant members.

Contingency Accommodation Arrangements

- 4** Since November 2021, the County Council has been responsible for providing support for refugees and family groups in the county under the British government resettlement scheme.
- 5** In March 2023, the UK Government announced plans to permanently end the use of bridging accommodation. Previously-used bridging hotel accommodation was served closure notices by the Home Office and, in accordance with government requirements, the hotels closed on 31 August 2023. Home Office contingency accommodation remains available until 31 December 2023. After this point no further Home Office accommodation is available. The County Council is therefore charged with securing accommodation for the remaining refugee families otherwise at risk of homelessness.
- 6** Securing accommodation is within a commercial rental market and therefore the ability to present a quick decision is frequently required. All accommodation is financed using Home Office grant monies at no cost to the County Council.
- 7** The Assistant Director (Communities), with the agreement of the Director of Law and Assurance and the Chairman of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee, has therefore approved the entering into of a nominations agreement for up to 11 new homes in the West Sussex area for a term of three years, from December 2023 to December 2026, with a commercial property provider.
- 8** Notice of the decision did not feature in the County Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions because the matter needed to be determined as soon as possible to comply with the Government's requirements and conditions. The decision was published on 30 November 2023.

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Leader

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