# Dartford council invests in properties for homeless and Afghan refugees



Dartford council in Kent has approved the purchase of four properties for nearly £1.7 million aimed at providing accommodation for the homeless and Afghan refugees, as reported by Kent Live. The decision was made during a cabinet meeting on March 27, with funding partially coming from the government.

The total expenditure of around £1.7 million includes £730,000 from the government under its Local Authority Housing Fund, while the remaining £950,000 is sourced from the council's reserves. Of the four properties being secured, three will serve as temporary accommodation for homeless families, while the fourth is designated for an Afghan household as part of a government resettlement initiative.

Dartford council initially sought to acquire 20 properties but had their request narrowed down. Council documents indicated that this bid was "not accepted", reflecting a local struggle against dwindling temporary accommodation options. The situation has been exacerbated by rising rental costs imposed by private landlords on the council, making it challenging to maintain adequate housing stock for those in need.

According to council statistics, the housing register has seen a nearly 32% rise in the number of individuals lacking suitable housing between January and December of the previous year. As a response to these demands, a council spokesperson emphasised that receiving funding for four properties, while less than anticipated, would still significantly support efforts to address homelessness in the Dartford area.

The spokesperson stated, "This application reflects only one part of our work to end homelessness in Dartford and we're grateful for the contribution. We will continue to work with partner agencies and find opportunities to support those who are the most vulnerable in our communities."

Among the expected tenants, all three family homes are labelled as temporary accommodation, with the additional property having sufficient space designated for the resettled Afghan household.

Comments from local officials highlighted the ongoing need for more sustainable housing solutions. Cllr Debbie Graham, Dartford Labour’s housing spokeswoman, expressed her support for any initiative aimed at improving the current housing conditions. She noted that more than 400 households in Dartford are currently living in temporary accommodation, with many being relocated outside of the area due to the scarcity of available homes.

Graham remarked, "Temporary accommodation is merely a sticking plaster to the housing crisis and is not only costly in financial terms for the Council, it's also extremely costly both emotionally and psychologically for the affected families."

In light of the challenging housing situation, a spokesperson from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government reiterated the government’s commitment to improving living conditions, stating: "We're providing more homes for areas in need of better-quality temporary accommodation through our £50 million boost to the Local Authority Housing Fund." The spokesperson acknowledged the high demand for support from local councils and that funding was distributed to address the most pressing housing pressures.

Overall, Dartford council's recent decision highlights the complexities and pressing challenges in addressing homelessness and the provision of adequate housing in the region, illustrating a broader narrative of demand exceeding supply in local accommodation resources.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)