

 <b>EXECUTIVE</b> <b>6<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b> <b>7</b>
<b>Title</b>	Support for Government Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Marianne Rolfe – Head of Health & Community Protection Andrew Jones – Deputy Chief Executive	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>		
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>		
<b>Background Papers</b>		

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	Yes

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	11.3.16	Chris Elliott
Head of Service	11.3.16	Richard Hall/Marianne Rolfe
CMT	11.3.16	Andrew Jones
Section 151 Officer	14.3.16	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	11.3.16	Andrew Jones
Finance	14.3.16	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	11.3.16	Moirra-Ann Grainger
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		
N/A		
<b>Final Decision?</b>		Yes
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		

## 1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The Government has asked local authorities to consider assisting with resettling Syrian Refugees, to help it meet its commitment to finding homes for 20,000 refugees within this parliamentary term. The report proposes a response to this.

## 2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Warwick District Council commits to supporting the Government's Syrian Refugee scheme by pledging to assist in resettling up to five families within this district, within the life of the current scheme.
- 2.2 This commitment is dependent upon there being clear and properly funded arrangements in place to manage and settle refugees.
- 2.3 That the Head of Health & Community Protection, with the Portfolio Holder, be given authority to agree to the acceptability of arrangements as in 2.2 above, prior to any refugees being resettled in this district.

## 3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Syrian Refugee crisis is a major humanitarian crisis. The Government has responded to this by pledging to resettle 20,000 people from United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) camps.
- 3.2 Local authorities in the UK have been asked to make pledges as to how many refugees they can settle within their areas.
- 3.3 Discussions have taken place with our colleagues sub-regionally and at a regional level with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP – who act on behalf of the Government in the region) to assess how authorities can work together to support the refugee resettlement programme. It is now considered that this authority can commit to a pledge.
- 3.4 With regard to the number of places the Council can offer, this has been agreed with WMSMP in conjunction with other authorities in the sub-region, as a proportionate initial commitment. Should the overall requirements of the scheme change then this could be reconsidered.
- 3.5 The practical steps and implications of settling refugees in Warwickshire are still being worked through but the intention is to build on the experience of other authorities with expertise in this field eg Coventry City Council.
- 3.6 Local authorities and agencies in the west midlands area have been meeting to assess how to respond to the Government's request for support for Syrian Refugees.
- 3.7 More locally Warwickshire District and Borough representatives have been meeting with Warwickshire County representatives and the Police to understand how we might respond. It has been agreed that we will work together and that the county will take a lead. They have established a role to coordinate this work.

- 3.8 Discussions are also taking place with Coventry City Council, who are an Asylum Resettlement authority and have considerable experience in these matters. We are maintaining contact with relevant voluntary sector groups.
- 3.9 Key to placing families in the community is the availability of health and education services. The availability of these is being assessed and any suitable housing offered would take these into account.
- 3.10 The Government programme emphasises that any families coming into the country will have been thoroughly assessed at different stages for their needs and for security purposes, at the UNHCR camps. Local authorities will be provided with relevant information which will help with decisions about placement.
- 3.11 It is not likely that Warwick District would be in a position to receive any refugees until the end of this year at the earliest, though if plans did crystallise more quickly, members would be informed.
- 3.12 We would need to be assured that all appropriate measure were in place before we agreed to accept refugees. This is as important to the incoming families as it is to the Council and residents.
- 3.13 Initial work is in progress to assess housing availability. It is anticipated that the first option for housing will be in the private sector. However, the actual arrangement will depend on a number of variables, not least the timing of the arrival of families and their particular need.

#### **4. Policy Framework**

##### **4.1 Policy Framework – N/A**

##### **4.2 Fit for the Future – N/A**

##### **4.3 Impact Assessments –**

Refugees may have specific support needs but these will be known and advised before they are allowed into the country. Managing need once in the district will be part of the planned support package.

Because of the small numbers involved the impact on local communities is likely to be low. There is a multi-agency approach, which is emulated across the country and therefore the potential impacts will be taken into account.

#### **5. Budgetary Framework**

- 5.1 Funding is available from the Government as set out in the Appendix. The Government will be making the fund available through the County Council.

#### **6. Risks**

- 6.1 There are approximately four years remaining of the Syrian Refugee scheme. The offer is to re-settle 5 families within this district. With this number of people the impact is likely to be low.
- 6.2 The cost of housing in this area is a factor which presents a risk in relation to the funding available from Government. Whilst the funds may be sufficient for

some areas of the country the high cost of housing may put pressure on how the scheme is managed.

- 6.3 The intention is to continue to work with the sub-regional group to share experience and practice and to monitor the financial position.

## **7. Alternative Option(s) considered**

- 7.1 The authority could choose not to re-settle any refugees; however this stance is likely to come under pressure from the Government as well as from local groups supporting the scheme and the broader humanitarian situation.

## **8. Background**

- 8.1 As indicated above there is an expectation that local authorities across the country will assist the government in meeting its commitment. The Minister responsible for Syrian Refugees, Mr Richard Harrington MP, led a meeting of West Midlands authorities on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This was followed up by a letter, received on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016, in which the Minister asks local authorities, which have not yet offered places for refugees, to come forward. See Appendix 2.
- 8.2 Members will be aware that Offa House in Offchurch had been offered as a location to provide accommodation for Syrian Refugees and was granted planning permission to adapt the premises, prior to a decision by the Home Office about funding. At the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February the Minister confirmed that the Home Office had decided not to fund this project as its chosen policy is to place refugees directly into accommodation, rather than providing transit locations.

It is therefore understood that the Offa House project will not proceed.



### Syrian Resettlement Scheme - Funding Process

#### Year 1

The principle is that first year costs are covered. To make the scheme workable for 20,000 refugees rather than a few hundred, as well as multiple local authority hosts, we have done some detailed work to move to a unit cost approach. The costs are based on data drawn from all the current resettlement schemes we operate – Gateway, the VPR, and our Afghan resettlement programme. However, these are significantly smaller than the proposed extension to the VPR and do not always provide helpful data to allow us to set a unit cost at a level which gives us confidence that partner organisations are reimbursed appropriately for specific costs. This is particularly true for additional medical and educational requirements and for social care costs. We are therefore proposing a) that local authorities can be flexible between elements of the unit cost and to pool them (i.e. to offset overspends in one area with underspends in another, and b) while a uniform approach is needed to deliver the scheme as quickly and effectively as possible, there will be instances where further discussion may be necessary and some costs effectively topped up.

The working unit costs per refugee are:

Children under the age of 3	Unit cost = £10,720
Children aged 3-4	Unit cost = £13,970
Children aged 5-18	Unit cost = £16,220
Adults in receipt of mainstream benefits	Unit cost = £23,420
Other adults	Unit cost = £10,720

This is broken down as follows:

UNIT COST FOR SYRIA VPR SCHEME					
	Adult Benefit Claimant	Other Adults	Children 5- 18	Children 3-4	Children U-3
	£	£	£	£	£
Local Authority Costs	8,520	8,520	8,520	8,520	8,520
Education	0	0	4,500	2,250	0
Special Educational Needs	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
DWP Benefits	12,700	0	0	0	0
Primary medical care	200	200	200	200	200
Secondary medical care	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>23,420</b>	<b>10,720</b>	<b>16,220</b>	<b>13,970</b>	<b>10,720</b>

Local authorities will therefore receive the following unit costs:

Children under the age of 3	Unit cost = £8,520
Children aged 3-4	Unit cost = £11,770
Children aged 5-18	Unit cost = £14,020
Adults in receipt of mainstream benefits	Unit cost = £8,520
Other adults	Unit cost = £8,520

Some points to note:

- Local authority costs cover management of the scheme, housing, and cultural integration including English language provision as per the current scheme
- There is an element included in the local authority costs for social care also – any cases where social care costs cannot be accommodated within this figure would need to be topped up separately
- For SEN, the provision is expected to cover an assessment, and any specific needs identified would then need topping up separately per child
- Medical care costs are split into two – the cost of registering a new arrival with a GP, which is minimal, and secondary medical costs for refugees with more serious medical needs, which are potentially more expensive. Legitimate costs above this would be covered
- Benefits are paid directly by us to the DWP and health costs are paid directly to Clinical Commissioning Groups.

#### Year 2 onwards

You will I hope have seen the Minister's letter to Chief Executives confirming that we will also provide additional funding to assist with costs incurred in future years, and that these arrangements will be applied to all cases since the 20,000 expansion was announced. The detail of this is still being worked through.



Richard Harrington MP  
Minister with Responsibility for Syrian  
Refugees

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Dear Andrew

07 MAR 2016

I was very pleased to meet representatives from the West Midlands at the conference on the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

The conference was an opportunity to discuss the programme to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection in the UK over the lifetime of this Parliament. Over 1,000 refugees have now been resettled. This would not have been possible without the help of councils who rose to the challenge to settle the first arrivals. I am very grateful for the early support provided by yourselves and colleagues.

However our work is far from complete. We are now working with our Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships, authorities and partners to design a scaled up programme which can resettle a further 19,000 refugees by the end of this Parliament. I know that authorities in the West Midlands have the capacity and commitment to contribute significant numbers of resettlement places to reach that target.

I would like to offer my thanks to those who have pledged to offer resettlement places so far. I know that you have been working with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP) over recent months to identify appropriate structures for managing the programme. My officials will be in contact with you to discuss the next steps. If you feel you can increase the number offered to date I would be very keen to hear from you.

We now need those local authorities that have yet to offer places to come forward to confirm how many refugees they can resettle. This will enable the government and local authorities to plan effectively for arrivals by identifying a pipeline of places throughout the lifetime of the programme. Whilst it is essential we continue to secure long term places, we would also like to hear from authorities who are able to offer places over the next three to six months. I would be grateful if you could confirm whether you would be in a position to assist with this.

If you would like to offer places, or would like any further information on the scheme please contact Jeannette Henderson in the Syrian Resettlement Team on 0303 444 1810 or email [jeannette.henderson@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jeannette.henderson@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

As outlined at the regional conference, the WMSMP is working with us to provide regional support for this programme. I would encourage you to maintain communication with them also as we move forward, to ensure a smooth and timely implementation of the programme, and to support you individually as needed over the coming months. Your lead contact remains Dally Panesar, WMSMP Lead Officer, who is available on 0121 464 7174 or email [Dalvinder.panesar@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Dalvinder.panesar@birmingham.gov.uk).

*Best Regards*

*Richard*

**Richard Harrington MP**