



**SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION
SCHEME**

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain Council approval to participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Council:

- 2.1 Agrees to participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme (SVPR).
- 2.2 Agrees to the provision of two properties a year (10 people) in the private rented sector for the next five years to support the SVPR.
- 2.3 Approves an initial supplementary income and expenditure budget of £85,200. This will be financed from Home Office funding allocated to Charnwood Borough Council, as the recipient authority, and pass ported to the Council.
- 2.4 Agrees to delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction) for an additional increase in the income budget up to a maximum of £85,200 and matching expenditure budget up to a maximum of £85,200, if there is additional demand for the scheme, funded from the Home Office grant funding.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme.

- 3.1.1 In September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that Britain should resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees over the lifetime of this parliament. These refugees will be taken from camps in the countries neighbouring Syria using the established United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees process for identifying and resettling refugees.
- 3.1.2 Phase one saw approximately 1000 refugees coming into Britain with around 10% of these being resettled in the East Midlands. Phase 2 is due to commence on the 1st April and local authorities have been asked to assist with accommodating and supporting refugees.
- 3.1.3 Details of the scheme are as follows:
- Refugees will have had their status determined before entering into the country and will be given leave to remain for 5 years with full access to employment and public funds.
 - The Syrian scheme is funded and is provided on the basis of claiming to the Home Office for expenditure after it is incurred. The recipient local authority will receive £8,520 for each person within a family. There will be a separate

budget for education and health. Housing costs will be covered by local housing allowance/housing benefit.

- The funding reduces over the years of the scheme: year 2 £5,000, year 3 £3,700, year 4 £2,300 and year 5 £1,000.
- Charnwood Borough Council will act as the recipient authority on behalf of District Councils in the County and Rutland County Council.
- The Council will need to identify suitable accommodation, considering community cohesion, ASB, crime, school placements etc.
- The £8,520 must be used to fund housing set up (full, basic furniture), transport, English language translation and courses, support services and other necessary services to support the refugees.
- Work will take place with CCGs, DWP, police, education services and the voluntary/faith sector in the development of our local scheme.

3.1.4 In terms of practical considerations, once an authority has agreed to participate in the scheme they will be told 6 weeks in advance of arrival who has been identified to come to their area. Arrivals are due to take place on a quarterly basis. Information will be given on specific needs and requirements. Areas which have accepted refugees in the first phase have set up panels to discuss the refugees allocated, to discuss whether they are able to meet the needs of the refugees. At this point if the local authority, along with partners, feels they cannot accommodate the needs of the identified refugees they can respond accordingly, but the Home Office can overrule any refusal. It is also worth noting that refugees can refuse to come at any point right up to the flight leaving.

3.2 **Leicestershire's response.**

3.2.1 Leicester City Council has assisted a number of families in phase 1. The 7 Districts and Rutland have met recently to discuss their response. It has been agreed that there should be a partnership approach, including one conversation with CCGs and the voluntary sector (the Red Cross are a main provider of support) and joint procurement of items such as furniture packages, translation and support services.

3.2.2 Charnwood Borough Council have agreed to be the recipient authority on behalf of the District Councils in the County and Rutland County Council. They will liaise with the Home Office and make the funding claims for refugees. Funding will be passed onto councils depending on the number of refugees supported and expenditure incurred.

3.2.3 It has been agreed that a Coordinator post will be recruited to undertake the work on behalf of the partnership to cover the initial set up of any scheme and ongoing coordination and support. This will be funded out of payments received to support refugees.

3.3 **Considerations for Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.**

3.3.1 The Council's main responsibility is in the provision of accommodation. The average size of a refugee family is five persons. Whilst the Council does have its own housing stock, there is demand on the Housing Register for properties of the size needed to accommodate families of this size and, therefore, it is proposed that the Council will secure accommodation in the private rented sector to accommodate the refugee families. The Council does work with private landlords through its Housing Options work and will liaise with them over suitable properties in appropriate areas.

3.3.2 Properties would need to be below local housing allowance levels for housing benefit purposes. If properties aren't available at this rent level consideration could be given to using DHP to top up the rent, but this would need discretion to be used around the local policy recently agreed.

4. **ASYLUM DISPERSAL AREA**

4.1 This is a separate scheme to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme. A report on this issue will be brought forward at a later date, if required.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IB)**

5.1 The table below shows the estimated annual income based on 10 refugees.

ESTIMATED BOROUGH INCOME BASED ON 10 CLAIMANTS		
	COST	Allocated per claimant
	£	£
Year 1	85,200	8,520
Year 2	50,000	5,000
Year 3	37,000	3,700
Year 4	23,000	2,300
Year 5	10,000	1,000
Total	205,200	20,520

5.2 If approved, the Council will budget for income and expenditure based on the annual income in the table above. Therefore it is hoped there will be no net additional cost on the General Fund. If costs are incurred over the grant funding limit these will have to approved in accordance with financial procedure rules.

5.3 Based on 10 claimants a supplementary income budget for the grant and expenditure budget for costs is required to the value of £85,200

5.4 The actual number of families that may arrive is currently unknown. Therefore delegated authority is being requested for another additional 10 claimants on the basis the grant funding can be secured.

5.5 For additional claimants from 2017/18, budgets will be included as part of the General Fund budget report that will be presented to Council in February 2017.

National Grant Funding Scheme

5.6 First year costs for Central Government funding as summarised below.

UNIT COST FOR SYRIA VPR SCHEME					
Details of Central Government funding for the first year	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
Total	23,420	10,720	16,220	13,970	10,720

*Anticipated recipient local authority grant

5.7 The Government's intention is that there is no additional cost to the local taxpayer, however the funding settlement does significantly taper from years 2 to 5 and hence could expose the Council to additional costs. Central Government have indicated that year two to five funding will be allocated on a tariff basis over four years, tapering from £5,000 per person in year two to £1,000 per person in year five. This funding could assist with most of the expected costs in year's two to five and funding includes support for integration such as additional English language training as well as social care.

5.8 The particular cost to the Council will be in relation to housing. Housing costs will vary dependant on the size of the family and will be covered by local housing allowance/housing benefit.

5.9 Although the government's intention is that there is no additional cost to the local taxpayer, currently there is no mechanism to reclaim any additional costs. Therefore, unless further direction is given, if any additional costs are incurred, they will have to be met from Council balances.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AR)

6.1 Participation in the scheme remains voluntary and there is not a statutory duty to offer accommodation to Syrian families, however in participating in the scheme the Council is able to exercise its power in accordance with the General Power of Competence under s.1 of the Localism Act 2011. The Council will be exercising a public function and will therefore also be subject to s149 of the Equalities Act 2010.

6.2 The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a Refugee as:
 "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

6.3 Individuals arriving in the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme Selection will have been granted refugee status by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in advance of arriving in the UK. They will be granted 5 year 'humanitarian leave' to stay in the UK and access to public funds, access to the labour market and the possibility of a family reunion.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Contributes to the Corporate Plan priority of supporting vulnerable people.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 None at this stage. Consultation with the voluntary sector and partner agencies will take place as the scheme develops.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Appropriate support and services aren't in place to support refugees.	Ensure a strong partnership approach to the delivery of the scheme involving all key voluntary and public sector services.	Sharon Stacey
Community tensions resulting from negative views and perceptions held by some sectors of the public.	A clear communication strategy will be put in place.	Sharon St/Jaqueline Puffett

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 By their definition the Syrian refugees will be vulnerable and it will be necessary to ensure close partnership working with key statutory and voluntary agencies to enable the appropriate services and support to be provided.

10.2 Consideration will need to be given to where the refugees are accommodated and management of community cohesion around the placements.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers:

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