



# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Executive Leader Report

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**Report of:** Laraine Manley

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**Report to:** Cllr Julie Dore

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**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

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**Subject:** Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme

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**Author of Report:** Belinda Gallup  
273 5239

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**Key Decision:** Yes

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**Reason Key Decision:** Expenditure over £500,000

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### Summary:

In 2004 Sheffield City Council was the first local authority to welcome resettled refugees when the Gateway Protection Programme, (GPP) was launched in the UK. Since 2011 Sheffield has managed a Yorkshire and Humber Gateway resettlement delivery partnership involving Hull City Council and Refugee Council.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement in September 2015 that the UK would resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, the Home Office approached all local authorities to ask them to participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, (VPRS).

In January 2016 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods made the decision that the Executive Director, Communities, could provide for the resettlement of 10-15 Syrian families, up to 50 individuals. These families were resettled in Sheffield by 31 March 2016.

In February 2016 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods made a decision supporting the Council's continued involvement in both the GPP and the Syrian VPRS, resettling up to 150 refugees in total (75 for each scheme) each year from April 2016 to March 2019. If the GPP bid is successful the implications will be dealt with in a separate report.

Every local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region, 22 in total, have committed to resettling Syrian refugees over the course of the next three years. This report recommends that Sheffield joins with the other 21 local authorities in the region in welcoming and resettling Syrian refugees during the period from April 2016 to March 2019.

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**Reasons for Recommendations:**

The Council now has over 12 years' experience of management and delivery of refugee resettlement programmes, the longest involvement of any local authority in the UK.

The UK government have committed to resettling the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, bringing people to the UK who have fled the war and are temporarily based in neighbouring countries. The VPRS is funded by central government, with money provided at a level which funds the Council and its delivery partners to provide services and support to refugees for a period of up to 5 years following arrival in the city.

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**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Executive Leader:-

- i) notes the contents of this report, including the financial implications associated with continued participation in the Syria VPRS;
  - ii) agrees that the Council enters into a funding agreement with Leeds City Council, as the regional accountable body, to provide funding to the Council to support the resettlement of 75 Syrian refugees each year from April 2016 to March 2019.
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**Background papers :-**

Appendix A - Agreement between Leeds City Council and Sheffield City Council

Appendix B – Equality impact statement

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**Category of Report:        OPEN**

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## Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

<b>Financial Implications</b>
YES    Cleared by: M. Wassell
<b>Legal Implications</b>
YES    Cleared by: Andrea Simpson
<b>Equality of Opportunity Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Tackling Health Inequalities Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Human Rights Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Environmental and Sustainability implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Economic Impact</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Community Safety Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Human Resources Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by: Jo Wright-Coe
<b>Property Implications</b>
YES/NO    Cleared by:
<b>Area(s) Affected</b>
<b>Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead</b>
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
<b>Relevant Scrutiny Committee</b>
Safer and Sustainable Communities
<b>Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?</b>
NO
<b>Press Release</b>
YES/NO

## **REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE LEADER**

### **SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 In 2004 Sheffield City Council was the first local authority to welcome resettled refugees when the Gateway Protection Programme, (GPP) was launched in the UK. Since 2011 Sheffield has managed a Yorkshire and Humber Gateway resettlement delivery partnership involving Hull City Council and Refugee Council.
- 1.2 Following the Prime Minister's announcement in September 2015 that the UK would resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, the Home Office approached all local authorities to ask them to participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, (VPRS)
- 1.3 In January 2016 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods made the decision that the Executive Director, Communities, could provide for the resettlement of 10-15 Syrian families, up to 50 individuals. These families were resettled in Sheffield by 31 March 2016.
- 1.4 In February 2016 the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods made a decision supporting the Council's continued involvement in both the GPP and the Syrian VPRS, resettling up to 150 refugees in total (75 for each scheme) each year from April 2016 to March 2019. If the GPP bid is successful the implications will be dealt with in a separate report.
- 1.5 Every local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region, 22 in total, have committed to resettling Syrian refugees over the course of the next three years. This report recommends that Sheffield joins with the other 21 local authorities in the region in welcoming and resettling Syrian refugees during the period from April 2016 to March 2019.

#### **2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE**

- 2.1 Sheffield was the first city to participate in the Gateway programme, the first City of Sanctuary in the UK and was one of the first cities to welcome Syrian refugees under the VPRS.
- 2.2 Continued participation in the VPRS supports the city's ongoing commitment to providing a place of safety and durable solution for some of the most vulnerable refugees who have been forced to leave their country and seek temporary safety in a neighbouring country.
- 2.3 Participation in the VPRS aligns the citizens of Sheffield with citizens across the rest of the region in welcoming Syrian refugees into the neighbourhoods and communities across Yorkshire and the Humber.

#### **3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY**

- 3.1 Under the VPRS the Council will receive central government funding, via Leeds City Council as the accountable body, for the first five years following the arrival of refugees.

- 3.2 Funding levels have been confirmed, reducing from £8,520 per person in year one, to £1,000 per person in year five. These funding levels will finance the provision of housing, tenancy support, ESOL and integration support (provided by the Refugee Council under a separate agreement). Additional funding is provided for education and separate funding given to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for health provision.

#### **4.0 THE VPRS**

- 4.1 The Syrian VPRS involves central government working with UNHCR to identify the most vulnerable Syrian refugees who have already fled Syria and sought temporary refuge in a neighbouring country. 20,000 of these refugees will be resettled in the UK during the lifetime of this parliament. The VPRS is based on need, and prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their temporary host country and who are unable to return to Syria. The UK government will carry out medical and security checks and pass cases to local strategic migration partnerships, who will then route cases to local authorities, to either accept or reject.
- 4.2 Resettlement of Syrian refugees is carried out in the same way that the Gateway Protection Programme provides for other refugees in the city. The City Council is responsible for sourcing suitable accommodation, decisions about the location of the housing will be made in consultation with officers responsible for school admissions and representatives from the NHS. The refugees will be housed in social (Council or Registered Provider) or private rented accommodation. To date four housing associations have provided housing for the VPRS, with a commitment from these four housing associations, as well as interest from another three housing associations, to provide additional units for refugee resettlement programmes going forward. Tenancy support will be provided by the Council with integration support provided by the Refugee Council.
- 4.3 Support is provided following arrival in the city and is funded by central government. For the first phase, up to March 2016, the Council received funding direct from the Home Office and had an agreement for the provision of housing, integration support and education costs. The Home Office entered into a separate grant agreement with health. The Council then made an agreement with the Refugee Council for the elements of the programme that they delivered which reflected the Home Office's requirements.
- 4.4 Rather than entering into agreements with every individual local authority the Home Office will fund the scheme in future via regional strategic migration partnerships (SMPs). In the Yorkshire and the Humber region the SMP, Migration Yorkshire, is hosted by Leeds City Council. The Home Office will enter into a funding agreement with Leeds City Council which sets out the requirements of the VPRS and associated funding for all the 22 local authorities in the region. A copy of this agreement is included in the partnership agreement between Leeds City Council and Sheffield City Council attached as Appendix A of this report.
- 4.5 Leeds will then enter into a partnership agreement with Sheffield City Council (and separately with each other local authority involved) which reflects the terms of the agreement between the Home Office and Leeds. This partnership agreement will include the number of refugees to be resettled by Sheffield, the funding Sheffield City Council will receive and the percentage fee that will be deducted from the payment to Sheffield and retained by Leeds for management and co-ordination

costs. A copy of the draft agreement between Leeds and Sheffield City Councils is attached to this report as Appendix A.

- 4.6 Under this arrangement Leeds City Council will be the Accountable Body to the Home Office. Sheffield City Council will deliver the housing, tenancy support and ESOL elements of the service. Leeds will contract separately with the Refugee Council to deliver integration support in Sheffield so there will be no contractual arrangements between Sheffield City Council and the Refugee Council although the two will continue to work together.
- 4.7 Additional funding is payable to support the education of children in year one. This money will also come through Leeds City Council and will form part of the partnership agreement between Leeds and Sheffield. Supporting children into schools as well as supporting the school/home relationship will be managed and delivered by the Targeted Support Service within CYPF.
- 4.8 Central government will also provide funding to the CCG for primary and secondary health care costs included in the first year. This funding agreement is separate and additional to the funding agreement with the local authorities.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The partnership agreement between Sheffield City Council and Leeds City Council is attached in Appendix A. The funding agreement between the Home Office and Leeds City Council is also included in Appendix A as part of the partnership agreement. Officers from Legal Services have reviewed the proposed agreement between Leeds and Sheffield and confirmed that the terms and conditions are acceptable.
- 5.2 Where families are allocated Council housing or nominated to registered providers this will be done in accordance with the Council's statutory Allocations Policy.

## **6.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 An EIA has been carried out and is attached at Appendix B. The main impacts identified are that the continuation of refugee resettlement programmes in Sheffield will have a positive equality impact primarily on BME communities as all refugees being resettled will be from a BME background. The VPRS will offer those who are resettled the only chance of a durable solution to their protracted situation. Refugees may also have other protected characteristics which may be relevant to their resettlement needs and this would be addressed as part of the individualised support they receive, for example, some of the refugees who are resettled may have suffered persecution on the basis of their sexuality or religion.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Funding levels per refugee for the VPRS (excluding health and education costs) have been initially confirmed by the Home Office as £8,520 in year 1, £5,000 in year 2 tapering to £1,000 in year 5. Table 1 below summarises the estimated funding levels that would be paid to the Council each year, after the deductions have been made for Leeds City Council's management and co-ordination costs (up to 3.5% of annual funding allocations) and the Refugee Council's integration support costs. Assuming a total of 225 refugees over 3 years (75 per annum), the total funding

available to Sheffield City Council to support this number of refugees is estimated to be £3.64 million.

Table1: Estimated Funding For VPRS					
Year	Arrivals	Sheffield CC £	Leeds CC(3.5% Admin) £	Refugee Council £	Total £
16/17	75	345,060	22,365	271,575	639,000
17/18	75	706,935	35,490	271,575	1,014,000
18/19	75	974,723	45,203	271,575	1,291,500
19/20	0	796,125	28,875	0	825,000
20/21	0	506,625	18,375	0	525,000
21/22	0	238,838	8,663	0	247,500
22/23	0	72,375	2,625	0	75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>3,640,680</b>	<b>161,595</b>	<b>814,725</b>	<b>4,617,000</b>

## 7.2 Funding for Social Care

The Home Office have advised that there will be an 'exceptional cases' fund which local authorities can apply to for cases where the social care costs are high, and cannot be met from the income received through the VPRS funding. The Home Office have not yet confirmed the criteria or process for making claims to the 'exceptional cases' fund and as such exact details of funding rates and demand level are not available at present. No alternative funding has been identified within Sheffield City Council's budgets should costs exceed funding levels.

## 7.3 Funding for Education

One off education funding is to be provided at the following rates for the first year only: £4,500 (age 5-18) and £2,250 (age 3 and 4). The details of how many children fall into these age ranges are not currently available. This funding is above and beyond the funding per pupil provided to schools via the Department of Education's Dedicated Schools Grant.

## 7.4 Funding for Primary and Secondary Medical Care

Funding for primary and secondary medical care costs to be at the following rates per person: Primary (£600) and Secondary (£2,000) Funding will also be made available in year 1 for any additional secondary care costs incurred with details to be confirmed. Details of demand levels are not available at present. This funding will be paid directly to the CCG by the government and administered by them.

## 7.5 Costings and Funding for the programme

The programme will be managed and delivered by Housing Solutions, using the same officers for the VPRS as used for the current final year of the Gateway programme. The total grant funding received over the life of the programme is estimated to be around £3.64million. Whilst it is anticipated that some refugees will require additional support and services from the Council, no figures are currently available for these costs and they are anticipated to be funded from within the

available grant allocations. No alternative funding has been identified within the Council's budgets should the costs of the VPRS programme exceed available funding levels.

## **8.0 H.R IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Council resettles 150 refugees per annum across both the VPRS and GPP, if the tender is successful. However, income received from the VPRS alone would be sufficient to fund a fte Team Manager post within Housing Solutions to ensure that the additional monitoring requirements associated with the returns for VPRS as well as the capacity to co-ordinate the Council's involvement in both resettlement schemes, manage the relationship with central government and represent the Council regionally can be successfully delivered.
- 8.2 The provision of the Property Support and Handy Person roles currently undertaken by Kier operatives will be reviewed in 2016/17, in preparation for the insourcing of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service to take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## **9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 Every local authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region will be resettling Syrian refugees over the course of this parliament and if Sheffield resettles 75 per annum between 2016 – 2019 the Council will be playing its part in the regional and national response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.
- 9.2 The VPRS funding is specifically for local authorities, to reimburse expenditure associated with resettling Syrian refugees. If the Council does not commit to joining the regional arrangements with the other local authorities it is very unlikely that any further refugees from Syria would be able to be resettled in the city.

## **10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 The Council now has over 12 years' experience of management and delivery of refugee resettlement programmes, the longest involvement of any local authority in the UK.
- 10.2 The UK government have committed to resettling the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, bringing people to the UK who have fled the war and are temporarily based in neighbouring countries. The VPRS is funded by central government, with money provided at a level which funds the Council and its delivery partners to provide services and support to refugees for a period of up to 5 years following arrival in the city

## **11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 It is recommended that the Executive Leader:-
- i) notes the contents of this report, including the financial implications associated with continued participation in the Syria VPRS;
  - ii) agrees that the Council enters into a funding agreement with Leeds City Council to provide funding to the Council to support



the resettlement of 75 Syrian refugees each year from April 2016 to March 2019.

Belinda Gallup  
Service Manager Housing Solutions  
4/4/2016