



**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** (*Carl Mullooly – Accommodation and Support Team Service Manager*)

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**Report of:** *Executive Director, Place*

**Report to:** *Cabinet*

**Date of Decision:** *18<sup>th</sup> March 2020*

**Subject:** *UK Resettlement Scheme Arrangements*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
- Affects 2 or more Wards		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Neighbourhoods and Community Safety</i>				
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Safer and Stronger Communities</i>				
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>386</i>				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				

**Purpose of Report:**

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 received funding from the Home Office to manage a GPP delivery partnership with the Refugee Council and Hull City Council.

Since 2016 Sheffield City Council has also resettled refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) through an agreement with Leeds City Council as the host authority for Migration Yorkshire, the regional Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP). In 2019 this agreement was varied to incorporate resettlement of additional refugees (not including any unaccompanied

asylum seeking children) under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

Cabinet agreed this variation, and an extension of both funding agreements enabling the Council to continue to resettle refugees under all three schemes until May 2020, in March 2019. The report to Cabinet noted that the Home Office intended to carry out a review of the current refugee resettlement arrangements. That review has been completed and resulted in a proposal to consolidate all three schemes into a single UK Resettlement Scheme to be put into operation by variation and further extension to the existing agreements with SMPs.

The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet of the request that the Council continues to resettle refugees under the new UK Resettlement Scheme. A requirement of the new scheme is to maintain support for these refugees for five years from arrival. A working relationship is in place with Migration Yorkshire which can be developed to provide resettlement for this new joint scheme.

The programme is fully funded and does not incur additional costs to the Council.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cabinet

- i. notes the contents of the report and in particular the financial implications;
- ii. approves the acceptance of Home Office funding by entering into an extension to the partnership agreement with Migration Yorkshire to deliver the UK Resettlement Scheme to refugee arrivals between April 2020 and March 2021;
- iii. agrees that the existing funding agreement with Leeds City Council, as the regional accountable body, for delivery of the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme in Sheffield be varied to provide funding to the Council to continue providing resettlement and support under the new joint UK Resettlement Scheme
- iv. delegates authority to the Executive Director, Place, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services, to instruct the Director of Legal and Governance Services to finalise terms and complete the necessary documentation;
- v. authorises the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods to accept 120 refugee arrivals with a potential increase up to a maximum of 150 refugees.
- vi. authorises the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods to continue this arrangement on the same terms for a further three years provided there are no significant changes to the scheme and its related finance model.

**Background Papers:**

- Appendix 1 – HO announcement letter
- Appendix 2 – Briefing note for Local Authorities A
- Appendix 3 - Briefing note for Local Authorities B
- Appendix 4 - EIA
- Appendix 5 – MY new Global Resettlement Scheme letter

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Sonya Oates</i>
	Legal: <i>Andrea Simpson</i>
	Equalities: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>EMT member who approved submission:</b> <i>Laraine Manley</i>
3	<b>Cabinet Member consulted:</b> <i>Cllr Paul Wood Cllr Jackie Drayton Cllr George Lindars-Hammond</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Carl Mullooly</i>
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Service Manager</i>
<b>Date:</b> <i>30<sup>th</sup> January 2020</i>	

## **1. PROPOSAL**

### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 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 2016 Sheffield City Council has resettled refugees under both the GPP and the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS). Sheffield is a City of Sanctuary and has successfully resettled 1180 refugees under the GPP since 2004 and 320 refugees under VPRS and VCRS schemes up to the end of October 2019. In March 2019 Cabinet agreed that the Council would continue to resettle refugees under all three schemes until March 2020, when the current delivery agreements end. The schemes are described briefly later in this report and in more detail in the 2019 report to Cabinet.

1.1.2 The Home Office has carried out a review of the current refugee resettlement arrangements and proposes to consolidate all three schemes into a single UK Resettlement Scheme, providing the same level of support for all resettled refugees, as stated in its letter to Council Leaders attached to this report as Appendix 1. This scheme will be delivered under the VPRS model from April 2020 and will initially be in place for one year. It is proposed that Sheffield agrees to resettle a minimum of 120 refugees and up to a maximum of 150 during this period.

1.1.3 The majority of people arriving have been resettled into private rented accommodation, with some accessing housing association properties. A small number have accessed low demand council properties that are hard to let and accruing rent loss. These arrangements will continue.

1.1.4 As set out in the letter from Migration Yorkshire attached to this report as Appendix 5, the Home Office has indicated that it intends to continue with the same arrangements for the delivery of refugee resettlement after April 2021 but cannot confirm the details until the government's comprehensive spending review has been completed. It is anticipated that this will result in the UK Resettlement Scheme being delivered from 2021 on the same terms for a minimum period of a further three years and this report seeks approval to continue to deliver the programme on this basis provided there are no significant changes to the scheme. Any such changes would be the subject of a future executive report addressing the viability of continuing to participate in the scheme.

### **1.2 Gateway Protection Programme**

1.2.1 The Gateway Protection programme (GPP) is the UK refugee resettlement programme run by the Home Office in conjunction with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The GPP resettles refugees who are not able to return to their country of origin or remain long term in their host country. The GPP is fully funded by the Home Office for the first 12 months after the

refugees arrive, including housing, healthcare, education and casework support.

1.2.2 Since 2011 Sheffield City Council has managed a Yorkshire and Humber Gateway resettlement delivery partnership involving Hull City Council and Refugee Council. The two local authorities (Sheffield and Hull) secure housing (mainly private rented) and provide tenancy support for the resettled refugees whilst the Refugee Council provides the reception and integration support for the refugees for the first 12 months after their arrival in the UK.

1.2.3 Sheffield City Council is the Accountable Body for the Home Office grant in respect of Hull City Council and the Refugee Council and has entered into funding sub-agreements with both organisations for the elements of the programme that they deliver on terms which reflect the Council's agreement with the Home Office. The current funding agreements provide for refugees to be resettled until March 2020 with support provided until March 2021.

### **1.3 Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme**

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

1.3.2 Rather than entering into agreements with every individual local authority the Home Office funds this scheme 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 entered into a funding agreement with Leeds City Council which set out the requirements of the VPRS and associated funding for all the 22 local authorities in the region. This agreement has been extended to provide for refugees to be resettled up to March 2020.

1.3.3 Leeds has entered into a partnership agreement with Sheffield City Council (and separately with each other local authority involved) reflecting the terms of the agreement between the Home Office and Leeds. This partnership agreement includes the number of refugees to be resettled by Sheffield, the funding received by Sheffield City Council and the percentage fee deducted from the payment to Sheffield and retained by Leeds for management and co-ordination costs.

1.3.4 Under this arrangement Leeds City Council is the Accountable Body to the Home Office. Sheffield City Council delivers the housing, tenancy support and ESOL elements of the service. Leeds has contracted separately with the Refugee Council to deliver integration support in Sheffield so there are no contractual arrangements between Sheffield City Council and the Refugee Council although the two continue to work together.

1.3.5 Refugees arriving under the VPRS receive Home Office Funding for up to 5 years from the date of arrival to help resettle and integrate them into the community. The same support is provided for refugees under this programme as the GPP for 12 months; however additional funding allows continued support for

refugees resettled under this programme for up to 5 years from the date of arrival.

#### **1.4 Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme**

1.4.1 In March 2018 the Home Office requested that Sheffield City Council consider resettling refugees under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS). This scheme is similar to the VPRS, but is specifically tailored to resettle vulnerable and refugee children at risk and their families from the Middle East and North Africa.

1.4.2 This scheme operates under the same terms as the VPRS and it is funded by Home Office via the regional strategic migration partnerships Migration Yorkshire in the Yorkshire and the Humber region). Delivery in Sheffield was approved by Cabinet in March 2019 and is implemented by variation to the VPRS agreement with Leeds City Council.

#### **1.5 UK Resettlement Scheme**

1.5.1 In June 2019 the UK Government announced a new resettlement Scheme called the UK Resettlement Scheme, consolidating the GPP, VPRS and VCRS into a single scheme that would be simpler to operate and provide greater consistency in the way the UK resettles refugees. The aim is that the UK will resettle 5,000 refugees a year under the scheme and provide five years of support for all resettled refugees. In August 2019 The Home Office and MCHLG jointly issued a Note to Local Authorities setting out further information about the scheme and gave a presentation on "UK Resettlement Post 2020". Copies of these documents are attached to this report as Appendices 2 and 3.

1.5.2 The government has advised that for arrivals during the first year, to April 2021, the funding package available under the UK Resettlement Scheme and the post-arrival support requirements of local authorities will mirror the VPRS/VCRS schemes. The funding arrangements will be as for VPRS, described above at paragraphs 1.3.2 – 1.3.5. It is anticipated that these arrangements will continue for refugees arriving in the three years, to April 2024, but this has not yet been confirmed by government.

1.5.3 It is proposed that Sheffield accepts a minimum of 120 refugees per year up to a maximum of a 150. The range of arrival numbers will allow flexibility in case of difficulties in sourcing the required number of properties, and will also allow the Gateway Team (as it is currently) the time to assess the increased amount of work in supporting all refugees for five years after resettlement.

### **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

2.1 Sheffield was the first City of Sanctuary and as a city is proud to welcome asylum seekers and refugees into its neighbourhoods. Continued involvement with the UK Resettlement Scheme supports this commitment and is a clear signal that Sheffield intends to be a place of safety for those fleeing persecution.

2.2 Many other local authorities have looked to Sheffield, as the first local authority

to participate in the Gateway programme, to give guidance and share experiences of the success of the programme in the city. Refugees have settled well into communities and integrated well into neighbourhoods, sharing different cultures and becoming active citizens alongside their neighbours.

- 2.3 Refugees are supported to become independent and integrated into the community with tailored support offered by both Sheffield City Council and Refugee Council staff.
- 2.4 The new scheme will continue to be delivered in tandem with SCC Education Service, the Targeted Support Service within the Libraries Learning Skills and People Portfolio, the Department for Work and Pensions, NHS Sheffield, City Sanctuary, and the voluntary community and faith sectors. Regular stakeholder meetings will be convened where planning for arrivals and ongoing support for the refugees who have already been resettled will be discussed.
- 2.5 Many of the refugees resettled have gone on to form community groups and join the Gateway Community Forum as they have become more established and integrated into the life of the city. Some of the refugees who arrived as children have gone on to university and a number of refugees have secured paid employment or are undertaking volunteering work, including befriending and supporting newer cohorts of refugees.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 The Council is not required to carry out a consultation process in respect of these proposals. A formal consultation process has not been carried out.

### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications**

- 4.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached to this report as Appendix 4. The main impacts identified are that a the extension of schemes will have a positive equality impact primarily on the BME communities as all refugees being resettled will be from a BME background. The programme offers the resettled refugees the only chance of a durable solution to their protracted refugee status. Refugees will also have other protected characteristics which may be relevant to their resettlement needs and this would be addressed as part of the individualised support that they receive, for example, some of the refugees who are resettled may have suffered persecution on the basis of their sexuality or religion. If the programme does not continue in Sheffield this may have a negative impact on the refugees awaiting resettlement. However, it would not impact on those who are currently involved in the programme as their resettlement support is guaranteed under the current programme arrangements

#### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 4.2.1 Funding

- 4.2.1.1 The Home Office has confirmed the funding package will continue at the levels of the Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme with the Council receiving a five year tariff of £20,520 for each refugee with an additional education tariff (for year one) for children aged 3 – 18 years. Refugees will continue to be able to access health care via the NHS free of charge. The Health Service Clinical Commissioning Group will also receive £2,600 per refugee per refugee arrival.
- 4.2.1.2 The proposed delivery model continues the current model established by Migration Yorkshire who have a separate funding agreement in place with the UK Refugee Council to assist with integration support.
- 4.2.1.3 The funding agreements will be based on outputs of a minimum of 120 refugees arriving in Sheffield. Each refugee will be provided with housing, integration support and ESOL. The funding will cover all fixed costs, e.g. salaries and variable costs, and accommodation set up costs.
- 4.2.1.4 The total funding based on 120 refugees supported for five years in Sheffield will be £1,505,104.80. Year 1 funding received will be £584,812.80 with funding tapering to £79,186.80 in year 5. Included within this funding are fees of up to 3.5% for Leeds City Council (Migration Yorkshire) management and coordination costs and 35.2% for the delivery of integration and support by Refugee Council so the amount received by Sheffield City Council will be net of these deductions.
- 4.2.1.5 If additional costs are identified prior to arrival for complex cases with needs beyond the capability of the agreed funding, a bid for additional funding will be made to the Home Office prior to agreeing to resettle those refugees.
- 4.2.1.6 The Education Resettlement Service will receive an amount of £4,500 for each child aged 5-18 and an amount of £2,250 for each child aged 3 or 4. This is used to support the admissions process for home school liaison and to provide classroom support for the children. No alternative sources of SCC funding have been identified should costs exceed the available funding.
- 4.2.1.7 Separate funding agreements are to be made between the Home Office and NHS Sheffield, which fund the initial patient registration and health screening process which takes place centrally at Mulberry Practice.
- 4.2.1.8 At the end of March 2021 up to 150 refugees may have been resettled in Sheffield. The Gateway Team will support these refugees for five years from date of arrival.
- 4.2.2 Procurement
- 4.2.2.1 While the majority of the support provided under these agreements is, and will continue to be provided by in-house services it may be necessary to procure external providers for certain elements. All public sector procurement is governed by both European Legislation and UK national law. In addition, all procurement in Sheffield City Council must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and Contracts Standing Orders.

Contracts Standing Orders requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase/acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.

#### 4.2.3 External Funding Comments:

4.2.3.1 Specific details regarding the UK Resettlement Scheme's grant funding agreement are not currently available so a detailed and timely review of financial and commercial implications will be vital when the grant offer is made. It will be essential to ensure that outcomes identified are realistic and achievable within the available funding levels prior to sign off of the grant agreement. SCC will need to identify and consider a number of financial management issues including (not exclusive):

- How funding is claimed under the new agreement.
- Previous grant funding has been subject to clawback if terms and conditions are not met. It should be assumed that this will be the case for the UK Resettlement Scheme.
- The financial management of funding across delivery partners/external providers.
- Managing financial risks if delivery costs exceed funding.
- Continuity planning/Exit Strategy.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Home Office has the power, under section 59 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, to participate in a project designed to arrange or assist the settlement of migrants (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere), including powers to provide financial support to an organisation in the United Kingdom or another country which arranges or participates in a project of that kind and to provide or arrange for the provision of financial or other assistance to a migrant who participates in a project of that kind. It will exercise these powers in respect of the UK Resettlement Scheme via arrangements with the regional SMPs (Migration Yorkshire in the Yorkshire and the Humber region) through funding agreements with the Accountable Bodies for those SMPs (Leeds City Council for Migration Yorkshire). Leeds City Council will enter into an agreement with Sheffield City Council and other organisations including the Refugee Council for delivery of services to refugees in Sheffield.

4.3.2 The documents relating to the VPRS partnership agreement between Sheffield City Council and Leeds City Council, including the Variation Agreement incorporating the VCRS funding remain in place. Officers from Legal Services will review the proposed variation agreement to confirm that the terms and conditions are acceptable.

4.3.3 The majority of people assisted under all schemes will be accommodated in private rented housing but it may occasionally be necessary to use social housing if individual needs cannot be met in the private sector. Where refugees are allocated Council housing or nominated to registered providers this will be

done in accordance with the Council's statutory Allocations Policy.

#### 4.4 HR Implications

4.4.1 The Grant funding for GPP and Syrian VPRS Scheme currently pays the salaries for the following posts:-

Post	No of	Grade	Gateway FTE	Syrian FTE
Service Manager	1	11	0.125	0.125
Team Manager	1	8	0.5	0.5
Monitoring Officer	0.6	5	0.3	0.3
Senior BSO	0.7	4	0.35	0.35
Housing Solutions Officer	2.5	5	0.75	1.75
Property Officer	1	6	0.5	0.5
Senior Housing Solutions Officer	1	6		1.0
Gateway Coordinator (Education)	1	7	1.0	
Family School Liaison Officer	1.25	6		1.25

4.4.2 It is anticipated that funding for the UK Resettlement Scheme will continue to fund these posts. If required, the Council's Achieving Change / MER procedure would be used to address any shortfall in funding against the number of posts and the structure within the Service.

#### 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 If the Council does not enter into the UK Resettlement Scheme with the Home Office via Leeds City Council for Migration Yorkshire it would mean that refugees waiting for resettlement may not be offered a place of sanctuary. It could affect national targets to resettle refugees.

#### 6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The Council now has over 15 years' experience of management and delivery of Refugee resettlement programmes, the longest involvement of any local authority in the UK.

6.2 The UK government has committed to resettling the most vulnerable refugees, bringing people to the UK who have fled the war, persecution and are temporarily based in neighbouring countries. The UK Resettlement Scheme 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.

Carl Mullooly, Accommodation and Support Team Service Manager