

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

26 March 2020

**Report of the Executive Director for Commissioning,
Communities and Policy**

VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR DERBYSHIRE

(1) Purpose of the Report

To update the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities on the delivery of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (SVPR) Scheme in Derbyshire.

To seek support to make a commitment to the new UK Resettlement Scheme, and for a continuation of the partnership approach under which Derbyshire County Council acts as the single point of contact and lead partner, including responsibility for financial arrangements.

(2) Information and Analysis

In September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that the UK would accept 20,000 Syrian refugees under the SVPR scheme, by the end of March 2020, in response to the crisis unfolding across Syria and Europe. Like many local authorities in the UK, Derbyshire agencies responded positively to the crisis forming a SVPR Partnership to look at the viability and implementation of a scheme for Derbyshire.

On 24 May 2016 the meeting of the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities approved Derbyshire's participation in the scheme. Since 2016 Derbyshire have pledged to welcome up to 130 refugees. A total of 108 refugees, in 25 family groups have resettled in Derbyshire and additional families are due to arrive prior to the end of March 2020.

Since 2015, the international migration climate has changed with more schemes being put in place by the Government to help the most vulnerable people in crisis across the world. In June 2019, the UK Resettlement Scheme was announced to commence in April 2020. This, in effect extends the current SVPR scheme. Many details remain the same, including the financial arrangements, however the new scheme will be open to all refugees identified by UNHCR to be in need of resettlement, and does not have a specific geographic focus. It is anticipated that for at least the first year of the scheme, the caseloads of refugees will continue to be similar to those resettled under the current scheme.

East Midlands Councils (EMC) will remain the lead organisation for the East

Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership. It will continue to provide support to local authorities to help to deliver resettlement, including coordinating offers of places and planning for the arrival of refugees. They will also continue to coordinate activities regarding asylum seekers in the region.

The Coordination of the SVPR is currently undertaken by Derbyshire County Council, but supported by the SVPR Partnership. It is proposed that the Partnership Group will continue to meet regularly to oversee, shape and develop the operation of the scheme in Derbyshire. This is a genuine partnership approach and will succeed by all agencies and key stakeholders working together in collaboration.

Caseworker support is currently provided by Upbeat Communities, a Derby based charity who specialise in working with refugees and asylum seekers. Their role is to work with the families directly and deal with the day to day issues which arise. Experience to date has identified that most families continue to require some level of case worker support until at least the end of their second year of resettlement, depending on their needs and how integrated and self-sufficient they are. Families with more complex needs are likely to take longer to achieve independence.

Communities within Derbyshire have been very welcoming, and families that have been resettled have integrated well. When asked *to what extent do you feel that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well?* All families answered positively. Individuals within five of the families have found paid employment since their arrival and the majority of families have one or more members of their household who regularly volunteer in their communities. All families attend English language lessons and many of those who arrived in 2016 and 2017 are now at Entry Level 3. All children aged 2 and above are in school or nursery. It is proposed to hold an event in the Spring to bring the families and partners together to celebrate the success of the scheme to date.

Under any future scheme we would seek to build on the successful delivery model we have developed under the current scheme. As is the case now, the County Council would be responsible for the financial arrangements of the scheme and would claim the funding from the Home Office. All costs associated with the co-ordination and delivery of the scheme are met from the funding provided.

The delivery of the scheme is dependent on district and borough councils providing support to secure housing. Approval is currently being sought from each of the district and borough councils that, once confirmed, would allow Derbyshire to make a formal commitment to participate in the new UK Resettlement scheme.

(3) Social Value Considerations

The Syrian VPR scheme will continue to provide a focused programme of support to fully integrate the refugees into their local communities, which will continue to foster positive relationships. Experience in the first 3 years has resulted in improved

outcomes for the refugee families and positive experiences for the local communities themselves.

(4) Financial Considerations

The refugee's resettlement costs, including co-ordination of the scheme, are fully funded by Central Government. For the first 12 months, an amount of £8,520 per refugee will be payable to the Council, received at regular intervals throughout the year. Funding will then be provided on a sliding scale, with the provision of £5,000 per refugee in year 2, reducing to £1,000 per refugee in year 5.

(5) Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, legal and human rights, equal opportunities, environmental, health and property considerations.

(6) Key Decision No

(7) Call-in The waiver of call in provisions is not required.

(8) Background papers

Held on file within the Commissioning, Communities and Policy Department.
Officer contact details Christine Flinton ext 38271.

(9) OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet Member:

1. Notes the achievement of the SVPR scheme to date.
2. Agrees the commitment for Derbyshire to participate in the UK Resettlement Scheme from April 2020, subject to the support from district and borough councils.
3. Supports the continuation of the partnership approach outlined above and agrees that Derbyshire County Council will continue to act as the single point of contact and lead partner for the scheme, including responsibility for the financial arrangements.

Emma Alexander
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