

**UPDATE REPORT: SCHEMES TO SUPPORT THE RESETTLEMENT OF  
SYRIAN AND AFGHAN INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN THE U.K.**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. At the Committee meeting on 2 December 2015 Members accepted the offer made by Councillor Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Well Being, to attend Committee to discuss the schemes to resettle Syrian and Afghan individuals and families. This report provides some background information setting out the context for the scheme.

**Scope of Scrutiny**

2. The scope of this scrutiny is to look at progress on the schemes to resettle Syrian and Afghan individuals and families. It does not cover other schemes for asylum seekers or refugees or immigration by other means.

**Background**

3. The UK Government Home Office has developed two schemes – the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme (VPR) and the resettlement of Afghan nationals that have supported the British Armed Forces in the Afghanistan conflict. A report outlining these and proposing in principle agreement to join the schemes was taken to the Cabinet Meeting held on 17 September 2015. The full report is attached at **Appendix A**.

4. At the Cabinet Meeting held on 17 September 2015 Members agreed the following recommendations:
- i. 'Agree in principle to enter into the Home Office's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme.*
  - ii. Agree in principle to enter into the Home Office's scheme for the resettlement of Afghan nationals that have supported the British Armed Forces in the Afghanistan conflict.*
  - iii. Note that a multi agency leadership group has been established to oversee the preparations for regional participation in the scheme comprising Members and Officers of the City of Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff University Health Board and Third Sector and Faith group representatives.*
  - iv. Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Well Being to progress the details of the Authorities involvement in the scheme.*
  - v. Refer this report for information to Council on 24<sup>th</sup> September to seek full Council support for the implementation of the scheme.'*<sup>1</sup>
5. At full Council on 24 September 2015, Members unanimously supported the Cabinet's proposals as set out above.
6. The report to Cabinet, attached at **Appendix A**, contains the following key information:
- i. Those who are accepted under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPR) are granted humanitarian protection giving them leave to remain for 5 years with full access to employment and public funds and rights to family reunion comparable to refugees. At the end of the 5 years, if they have not been able to return to Syria, they may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK.*
  - ii. The package for the resettlement scheme for Afghan individuals and families has three elements: up to 5 years paid training or education in*

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Cabinet Report attached in full at Appendix A to this report

- Afghanistan; or 18 months salary, paid in instalments; or relocation to the UK but only for interpreters or equivalent grades in front line roles outside the wire in Helmand, with immediate family.
- iii. Welsh Government had yet to confirm its position in relation to additional funding for Health services but had called a summit on the refugee situation on 17 September 2015.
  - iv. Initial discussions with the multi agency group had focused on the need to take a regional approach to ensuring the successful implementation of the scheme.
7. At Council on 24 March 2016, Councillor Elsmore (Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Well Being), gave a statement which included an update on the Syrian Resettlement Programme and she also provided responses to written questions from Councillor Bowden; copies of these are attached at **Appendix B**.

### **Way Forward**

8. Councillor Elsmore (Cabinet Member Health, Housing and Well Being) and Sarah McGill (Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services) will be in attendance to provide an update on these resettlement schemes and to answer Members questions on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme and the scheme to resettle Afghan nationals who have supported the British Armed Forces in the Afghanistan conflict.

### **Legal Implications**

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be

within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is recommended to note the information provided in the update and in the answers to questions and agree any comments, observations or recommendations it wishes to send to the Cabinet.

**David Marr**

**Interim Monitoring Officer**

**3 May 2016**