
VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the Committee with background information to enable Members to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of Cardiff Council's participation in the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 16 May 2019.
2. A copy of the draft Cabinet Proposal is attached at **Appendix A**.

Background

3. In January 2014 the UK Government made a commitment to resettle Syrian refugees in the UK as a result of the civil war. In September 2015, the UK Government announced a significant expansion of this commitment, with the formation of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) which aimed to resettle 20,000 refugees within the UK by March 2020.
4. Participation in the Scheme is on a voluntary basis, and is subject to grant funding being made available to Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council on an annual basis, to support the cost of resettlement and integration.
5. On 17 September 2015, Cabinet approved recommendations to pursue a regional approach to managing the project, under the guidance of the regional

multi-agency Leadership Group and in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council. With the delegation of authority given to the Corporate Director People and Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing & Well-being.

6. In May 2016, Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council agreed to participate in the resettlement of vulnerable Syrian refugees under the Home Office scheme on a regional basis, under a three year Collaborative Agreement. As a result, an Integration and Support Services provider was appointed to provide resettlement support across the region, in accordance with the requirements set out in the Home Office Funding Instructions (Attached at **Appendix B**).
7. Based on an assessment of local resources, including the capacity of primary/secondary health care, and the availability of school places and affordable accommodation, the Authorities jointly pledged to resettle up to sixty refugees per year for the lifespan of the programme.
8. Given the current demand on social housing, both Authorities elected to use private rented accommodation for this scheme in order to mitigate the long term impact on housing pressures in the region. However, each year it is proving more difficult to identify suitable accommodation in a housing market characterised by high demand.
9. In March 2017, and May 2018, the Corporate Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, approved recommendations to participate in the scheme for a second, and third (and final) term.
10. The agreement is due to expire on 16th May 2019, so Cabinet approval is now required to continue to participate in the resettlement of vulnerable refugees until March 2020, on a regional basis, in line with the Home Office scheme.

Funding

11. Under the current arrangements, Cardiff Council claims and receives the grant funding on behalf of both Authorities, and arrangements are in place to ensure the relevant funding is transferred to the Vale of Glamorgan Council at the end of each Financial Year.
12. In accordance with the Local Authority's Funding Instructions 2019-202 (Appendix B), the first 12 months of a refugee resettlement costs are fully funded from Central Government. The Authority is able to claim a tariff per person, according to the unit costs shown in Figure 1 Below:

Unit Costs for Syrian Resettlement Programme	Adult	Children 5 – 18 years	Children 3 - 4	Children under 3
Local Authority Costs	8,250	8,520	8,520	8,520
Education	0	4,500	2,250	0

Figure 1

13. Funding is available for five years, however, the amount diminishes for each additional year of stay, on the assumption the most significant costs are incurred in the first year. Year 2 to 5 unit costs are:

13-24 Months (Year 2)	25-36 Months (Year 3)	37-48 Months (Year 4)	49-60 Months (Year 5)
£5,000	£3,700	£2,300	£1,000

14. Attached at Appendix B is the Home Office 'Local Authority Funding Instructions 2019-20' which sets out the terms under which the Authority will make funding available to the recipient during the period April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

15. In keeping with established HM Treasury funding policies, the Authority will issue a fresh instruction for each financial year for which Funding is approved. This will occur whether or not any changes are made.

Issues

16. Due to the growing demand on social housing and the growing concern of homelessness, both Authorities have elected to use private rented accommodation for the scheme. However, each year there are growing difficulties in identifying and sourcing sufficient properties.
17. Both the Collaboration Agreement and the Integration Support Services Contract expire on 16th May 2019. Both were issued for an initial twelve month period, then extended by agreement for two additional twelve month terms. The maximum duration of both contracts is three years which does not mirror the full lifespan of the Home Office Programme, leaving concerns surrounding funding and the transition period for a new Service Contract.
18. The Cabinet Proposal attached at **Appendix A** set outs the legal and equality implications in line with the Equalities Act 2010 (**paragraphs 35 – 42**). The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) referenced in the proposal, and additional background papers are available upon request.
19. The Well-being of Future Generations Act also places a statutory duty on Public Bodies to publish well-being objectives, which are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2019-22. The relevance of these objectives are detailed in **paragraphs 43 – 46** of the Cabinet Proposal.

Cabinet Recommendations

20. Cabinet is recommended to

1. Agree in principle to continue to participate in the active resettlement of refugees from Syria until March 2020, in line with the lifespan of the current VPRS programme, and to provide necessary services to support integration for up to five years post-arrival.
2. Agree in principle to enter into a Collaborative Agreement with the Vale of Glamorgan Council for up to six years, to deliver the programme on a regional basis and delegate final approval to the Corporate Director in line with recommendation 4.
3. Authorise a competitive tender to appoint an Integration and Support Services Provider, to provide resettlement support to Syrian refugees across the region for up to six years, in compliance with the terms and conditions of the VPRS grant funding and delegate the approval of the evaluation criteria and documentation (as well as all aspects of the procurement) to the Corporate Director in line with recommendation 4.
4. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of People & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being, s.151 officer and Director of law and Governance to generally deal with all aspects of the procurement process and to progress and finalise arrangements for the delivery of the VPRS in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan including but not limited to the collaboration agreement with the Vale of Glamorgan and agreement with the Service provider.

Way Forward

19. Councillor Susan Elsmore, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health & Well-being has been invited to attend for this item. She will be supported by officers from the People & Communities Directorate.

Legal Implications

20. 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

21. 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:

- i. Consider the information provided in the Cabinet Proposal and subsequent appendices;
- ii. Decide whether it wishes to relay any comments or observations to the Cabinet at its meeting on the 16 May 2019; and decide the way forward with regard to any further scrutiny of this issue.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance and Legal Services

25 April 2019