

**APPROVAL FOR THE CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE  
VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (COUNCILLOR  
SUSAN ELSMORE)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 7**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the local and regional delivery of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and to recommend that Cardiff Council agrees to continue its regional participation in the Home Office programme, in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
2. To secure support to facilitate the appointment of a single Provider to deliver support to vulnerable refugees resettled through the VPRS across the region.
3. To note that the multi-agency leadership group, initially established to oversee the implementation of the programme across the region, continues to provide strategic governance and oversight. The group comprises and is attended by Members and Officers of Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff University Health Board and Third Sector and Faith group representatives.
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.

**Background**

5. In January 2014 the UK Government made a commitment to resettle Syrian refugees in the UK, who'd been displaced to neighbouring countries as result of 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 operates in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The primary purpose of the VPRS is to identify and resettle

20,000 of the most vulnerable refugees from Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, by March 2020. On 3rd July 2017, the Home Secretary announced that eligibility for the VPRS would be extended to all refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria, regardless of their nationality.

6. The UK Government sought the voluntary participation of all Local Authorities, and put in place grant funding to support the cost of arrivals in the first year, in terms of orientation, health and education.
7. 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, in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council (Cabinet Decision No. CAB/15/33, Minute No. 40 refers). Cabinet further approved the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director People and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing, to progress the detail of the Authorities involvement in the scheme.
8. The report was referred to Council to seek full Council support for the implementation of the scheme. On 24 September 2015, Council approved the Cabinet report (Item 11) recommendations in full.
9. 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. The pledge included accommodation arrangements for six families (adults and dependants) in Cardiff, and four in the Vale of Glamorgan, to be secured in the private rented sector, in order to negate the impact on social housing.
10. A Collaboration Agreement between Cardiff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council was signed on 17th May 2016 for an initial twelve month term.
11. Following a competitive tender, a Contract was awarded to Taff Housing Association to provide support services across the region, for up to three years. The Support Contract dovetailed with the Collaboration Agreement.
12. On a cost-share basis, a Regional Resettlement Co-ordinator was appointed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in April 2016, to implement and coordinate the operational delivery of the programme. Key responsibilities included the monitoring of the Integration and Support Services Provider, and to ensure full compliance with the statement of outcomes set out in the Funding Instructions 2019-20.
13. In March 2017, the Corporate Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, approved recommendations to participate in the VPRS for a second term and to extend all Agreements pursuant to the delivery of the scheme.

14. In May 2018, the Corporate Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, approved the extension of both Agreements for a third (and final) term, which are due to expire on 16th May 2019.
15. Since May 2016, the Authority has provided accommodation and support to sixteen families resettled in Cardiff under the VPRS. Despite their traumatic experiences, through the coordinated responses from key stakeholders, including Health, Housing and Education, all have begun to rebuild their lives in safety. The long term focus remains on supporting the families to live independently of support; to integrate into their new communities; and to realise their aspirations.
16. In July 2016, the Community Sponsorship Scheme was launched, which enables community groups (sponsors) to become directly involved in refugee resettlement. The Home Office intends to resettle one hundred and twenty families under this scheme. Cardiff Council has consented to the approval of one Community Sponsorship application to date, and is working with other interested groups to further their resettlement plans.
17. 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.
18. In accordance with the Local Authority Funding Instructions 2019-20, the first 12 months of a refugee's resettlement costs, excluding economic integration, are fully funded by Central Government from the Official Development Assistance budget.
19. 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 to 18	Children 3 to 4	Children under 3
Local Authority Costs	8,250	8,520	8,520	8,520
Education	0	4,500	2,250	0

Figure 1

20. The appropriate level of funding is transferred to schools who accept refugee children from the relevant age groups. Schools are responsible for recording expenditure for activities such as language support.
21. 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

22. The Local Authority may also claim £850 per capita, to support access to formal language training (ESOL) for adults only, appropriate to needs and ability. There are no prescribed activities for which the funding may be used, and Authorities may pool the funding to so as to maximise its ability to effectively identify individuals' language training requirements and be responsive to these needs through the most appropriate delivery arrangements and range of providers within a local area.
23. On a cost share basis, Cardiff Council delivers the following programmes to all adult refugees in the region. It is anticipated the Programmes will continue for 2019-20.
- Refugee Employment Support Programme
  - Informal Conversational English classes
24. On a cost share basis, Cardiff Council provides financial administration support to the Programme, through the Corporate Grants Officer. It is anticipated the support will continue for 2019-20.
25. It is expected that the Grant funding will be sufficient to meet the costs associated with resettlement for the duration of the Programme.

## Issues

26. In the context of high demand for social housing and growing homelessness, both Authorities elected to use private rented accommodation only, for the purposes of this scheme, to mitigate the long term impact on housing in the region. Each year, it has proven more challenging to identify sufficient units of suitable, affordable accommodation in a housing market characterised by high demand and high rent expectations.
27. Both the Collaboration Agreement and the Support Services Contract expire on 16th May 2019. Both were issued for an initial twelve month period, extendable by agreement for two additional twelve month terms. Therefore, the maximum duration of both contracts is three years, which does not mirror the full lifespan of the Home Office Programme. In simple

terms, both regional contracts are outlived by the terms and conditions of the Grant Funding, so the Council's responsibilities to provide accommodation and support (for resettled Syrian refugees) will continue after the current arrangements have ended.

28. The Integration and Support Services Contract and Collaboration Agreement with the Vale ends on 16th May 2019, so a Direct Award to the incumbent Provider and the Vale, for up to four months, has been approved to enable support and collaboration agreement to continue, pending the commissioning and procurement of a new Service Contract, and to ensure a smooth transition in the event the Contract is awarded to a new Provider.

### **Scrutiny Consideration**

29. The Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 1 May 2019. The letter from the Chair is attached at Appendix 2.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

30. The political situation in Syria remains extremely unstable and the safety of its citizens is still of grave concern. According to the Department for International Development (source Syria UNHCR), in March 2019, 400,000 people are estimated to have been killed since the conflict began. 5.6 million Syrian refugees are still living in neighbouring countries, and a further 6.2 million people have been internally displaced
31. Despite the coordinated efforts of partner organisations both in Syria and across the crisis region, access (for both internally displaced people and refugees) to suitable accommodation, healthcare, sanitation, and education is extremely challenging.
32. According to data published by the Home Office in February 2019, 14,945 refugees (including dependants) were resettled in the UK by the end of December 2018 under the VPRS. 959 refugees had been resettled by Welsh Authorities. Although numbers have been bolstered by Community Sponsorship, the Home Office still requires Local Authority assistance to meet its target of 20,000 refugees by March 2020
33. The proposed continuation of the regional arrangements (with the Vale of Glamorgan Council) ensures the economic benefits of providing services in both Local Authority areas, on a cost-share basis, are maximised. This approach ensures that services are more sustainable over the lifespan of the programme and makes better use of the Grant funding available. In the context of continued pressure on Local Government budgets, this is an opportunity to continue to deliver high quality, sustainable services to the community, regardless of where they live.
34. A Collaborative Agreement will need to be executed to enable the Local Authorities to participate on a regional basis beyond 16th May 2019. In order to meet the needs of refugees who arrive up to March 2020, it is suggested that a new back-to-back Agreement of up to six years would be

appropriate to ensure the continuation of all existing operational and administrative structures, to deliver joint-funded services and to comply in full with the terms of the grant funding.

### **Financial Implications**

35. External Grant is receivable in relation to the resettlement scheme. Any such expenditure should be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant and be planned in accordance with the timescales for eligibility of grant to ensure all costs are recoverable.

### **Legal Implications**

36. It is understood that Cardiff will procure a service provider to deliver the VPRS on behalf of Cardiff and the Vale and the two Councils will enter into a collaboration agreement to work together to deliver the VPRS in their respective administrative areas.
37. Detailed legal advice should be obtained throughout the procurement process with regard to i) the drafting of all the relevant procurement documentation (including the draft terms and conditions of contract) and ii) the procurement process and generally with regards the proposed collaboration agreement with the Vale of Glamorgan.
38. It is noted that the proposal is subject to grant funding. Accordingly, the Service Area will need to be satisfied that the Council can comply with any grant conditions attached to the funding and that in commissioning the services it complies with such conditions.
39. Further legal implications will be set out in the delegated report to the Corporate Director.

### **Equality Duty.**

40. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties) – the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). These duties require the Council to have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of 'protected characteristics'. The 'Protected characteristics' are: • Age • Gender reassignment • Sex • Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality • Disability • Pregnancy and maternity • Marriage and civil partnership • Sexual orientation • Religion or belief – including lack of belief.
41. As noted in the report, consideration has been given to the requirements to carry out Equality Impact Assessments ('EIA') and an EIA is in the background papers to the report so that the decision maker may understand the potential impacts of the proposals in terms of equality. This assists the decision maker to ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to the public sector equality duty.

42. Where a decision is likely to result in a detrimental impact on any group sharing a Protected Characteristic, consideration must be given to possible ways to mitigate the harm. If the harm cannot be avoided, the decision maker must balance the detrimental impact against the strength of the legitimate public need to pursue the recommended approach. The decision maker must be satisfied that having regard to all the relevant circumstances and the PSED, the proposals can be justified, and that all reasonable efforts have been made to mitigate the harm.
43. It is noted that Equality Impact Assessments (which include consideration of views and information obtained through consultation) is in the background papers to this report. The decision maker must consider and have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment prior to making the decisions recommended in the report.

### **Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Standard legal imps**

44. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible.
45. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well-being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national well-being goals. The well-being objectives are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2019-22. When exercising its functions, the Council is required to take all reasonable steps to meet its well-being objectives. This means that the decision makers should consider how the proposed decision will contribute towards meeting the well-being objectives and must be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to meet those objectives.
46. The well-being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:
  - Look to the long term
  - Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
  - Deliver an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
  - Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
  - Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them

47. The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>

### General

48. The decision maker should be satisfied that the proposal is in accordance within the financial and budgetary policy and represents value for money for the council.
49. The decision maker should also have regard to, when making its decision, to the Council's wider obligations under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

### HR Implications

50. A Regional Resettlement Co-ordinator was appointed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to implement and deliver the Programme, on a cost-share basis with Cardiff Council. This role is integral to the continued administration of the regional programme and it is expected that the role, including the cost-share arrangements, will be extended in line with the operational requirements of the Programme, subject to the availability of the Home Office Grant Funding.
51. Cardiff Council will conduct a competitive tender exercise to procure a Support Provider to provide integration and orientation support on behalf of both Local Authorities. If the incumbent provider is unsuccessful, TUPE regulations will apply.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>SARAH McGILL</b> <b>Corporate Director People &amp; Communities</b>
	10 May 2019

*The following appendix is attached:*

- Appendix 1 - Local Authority Funding Instructions 2019-20
- Appendix 2 – Letter from Chair of Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee

*The following background papers have been taken into account*

- Scheme To Support The Resettlement Of Syrian And Afghan Individuals And Families In The UK Cabinet report 17 September 2015
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Council 24 September 2015 – Cabinet Proposal. Agenda Item 11.
- Department for International Development – Syria Crisis Report Summary, March 2019.
- Community Sponsorship Guidance for Local Authorities