

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

**10 January 2019**

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

**SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT  
SCHEME FOR DERBYSHIRE**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

To update the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPR); to seek approval for the continuation of the partnership approach to the scheme, and for Derbyshire County Council to act as the single point of contact and lead partner including responsibility for financial arrangements; to make a commitment to resettle up to 30 Syrian refugees during 2019/20.

**2. Background**

In September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that the UK would accept 20,000 Syrian refugees by 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.

East Midlands Councils (EMC) remains the lead organisation for the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, which was established in 2000, to coordinate activities regarding asylum seekers in the region. Since then its role has progressively expanded to include strategic coordination in respect of all forms of international migration. East Midlands Councils is undertaking a regional role of coordinating the arrival of refugees to the region.

In May 2016, the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approved the recruitment of two posts to help to coordinate activity on behalf of the Partnership Group. These posts are currently filled by one full time SVPR Co-ordinator and two part time SVPR Project Officers (1 x fte)

Government funding is available for a five year period to support families resettled under the scheme. This is paid on a sliding scale, from £8,520 in year one to £1,000 in year five. Currently the County Council is responsible for the financial arrangements of the scheme and claims the funding from the Home Office, which is then used to cover the costs.

The current scheme, co-ordinated by the County Council, is a genuine partnership, with all agencies and key stakeholders working together in collaboration. The Council leads on strategic communications planning for the SVPR scheme and acts as a single point of contact for strategic media releases and enquiries involving more than one district and/or borough.

Caseworker support for the families is provided by Upbeat Communities, a Derby based charity who specialise in working with refugees and asylum seekers. Upbeat Communities were the preferred bidder, following a procurement exercise which was carried out in August 2016.

Derbyshire, through the SVPR Partnership, pledged to welcome 50 people in family groups during 2016-17. The first families arrived in November 2016 and 48 people in 11 family groups were successfully welcomed to Derbyshire during 2016 and 2017. A further pledge was made in November 2017 to resettle an additional 50 people in 2018/19. To date, during this period, 33 people in eight families have been resettled and plans are in place to resettle a further two families in early 2019 meaning the pledge will have been met.

The families who have been resettled in Derbyshire have been warmly welcomed and are making a contribution to their local communities. When compared to national and regional figures, the families in Derbyshire are achieving better outcomes. For example, 20 of the 30 adults resettled are regularly volunteering in a variety of roles, all families are involved in local groups, three individuals are now in work, including one of the September 2018 arrivals and all have agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well.

The Partnership Group continue to meet regularly to oversee, shape and develop the operation of the scheme in Derbyshire.

East Midlands Councils have requested that Derbyshire considers making a further pledge for 2019/20, this will be the last year of the current scheme. It is thought likely that a new scheme will be put in place from 2020 onwards, however details of this have not yet been published.

From the commitments made by District and Borough Council partners, and from the wider partners in relation to resettlement support, it is proposed that a commitment to resettle an additional 30 people in family groups during 2019-2020 be agreed.

If a further pledge is agreed, it is proposed to extend the contracts of the two posts in the resettlement team until the end of March 2022. This will enable the Council to continue to support the existing families in Derbyshire and take care of the arrival preparations and subsequent arrangements for future families.

### **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 gained in the first 24 months has resulted in improved outcomes for the refugee families and positive experiences for local communities.

### **4. Other Considerations**

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

### **5. Key Decision**      No

### **6. Call-in**

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? No

### **7. Background papers**

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

### **8. OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities:

1. Notes the achievements of the scheme to date.
2. Approves to the continuation of the partnership approach outlined 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.
3. Approves the proposal to make a further pledge to resettle up to an additional 30 Syrian refugees in 2019/20.

**Emma Alexander**  
**Strategic Director – Commissioning, Communities & Policy**