

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

30 November 2017

Report of the Strategic Director - Commissioning, Communities and Policy

**SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR
DERBYSHIRE
(Health and Communities)**

(1) Purpose of the Report

To update the Cabinet Member on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (SVPR) Scheme in Derbyshire.

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 seek approval for Derbyshire to take in up to an additional 50 Syrian refugees, from March 2018.

(2) Information and Analysis

Since 2015, the international migration climate has changed further with more schemes being put in place by the Government to help to support the most vulnerable people in crisis in the world. 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 Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (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 July 2016 Cabinet approved the proposal for Derbyshire to accept Syrian refugees under the SVPR and the SVPR Partnership pledged to welcome 50 people in family groups in the 12 months from November 2016. The first families arrived in November 2016 with further families arriving in March 2017 and May 2017. In total, 48 people in 11 family groups have been successfully welcomed to

Derbyshire.

The SVPR scheme is a voluntary scheme, at present, although Derbyshire has been asked by the government, through East Midlands Councils, to make pledges to accommodate further Syrian refugee families.

Government funding is available for a five year period to support families. This is paid on a sliding scale - from £8,520 in year one to £1,000 in year five. For year one, the main areas for which funding is required include property set up costs, transport from the airport, English language lessons, case worker support and the Partnership's co-ordination of the scheme. For years 2-5, it is anticipated that families will continue to need English language lessons and support to gain employment. Most families will continue to require some level of case worker support, 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.

The County Council is responsible for the financial arrangements of the scheme and coordinates claims for the funding from the Home Office, which is then used to cover the costs of support.

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. The two posts will continue to work to support the existing families in Derbyshire and they will take care of the arrival preparations and subsequent arrangements for future intakes of refugee families.

Key worker support is provided by Upbeat Communities, a Derby based charity who specialise in working with refugees and asylum seekers. It is proposed that they will continue to work with the families directly and deal with the day to day issues which arise. Upbeat Communities were the preferred bidder, following a procurement exercise which was carried out in August 2016. 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. Derbyshire County Council will lead on strategic communications planning for the SVPR scheme and act as a single point of contact for strategic media releases and enquiries involving more than one district and/or borough. The Cabinet Member is asked to note that the report and the approaches and actions outlined in it have been developed with and agreed by the Partnership group.

From the work undertaken during the past 12 months and lessons learned regarding family needs, the partnership has offered support which would allow resettlement of up to 50 refugees in family groups during 2018/19.

(3) Social Value Considerations

The SVPR 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 12 months has resulted in improved outcomes for the refugee families, with some now volunteering in their local communities. The response from Derbyshire communities has been overwhelmingly positive and there are many examples of communities coming together to welcome and support families.

The key worker support service is delivered by a local third sector organisation, this has enabled them to increase the reach outside of Derby City and to develop strong links with communities and increase capacity and specialist expertise across organisations within Derbyshire.

(4) Financial Considerations

The refugee's resettlement costs 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, financial, equal opportunities, environmental, health and property considerations.

(5) Key Decision

No

(6) Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

(7) Background papers

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme for Derbyshire - Report to the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities, 24 May 2016 and Report for Cabinet, 26 July 2016.

(8) OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet member:

- (8.1) Notes the achievement of successfully settling 48 people in 11 family groups as part of the SVPR scheme in 2016/17.
- (8.2) Approves 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.
- (8.3) Approves the offer that Derbyshire will be making to the government to resettle up to 50 people from March 2018.

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