

**DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES**



**DECISION NO: P&C31**

**SUBJECT: Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**

**DECISION:**

To authorise the acceptance of up to 3 households comprising immediate families with young children or vulnerable older people under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme and to delegate decision making regarding the acceptance of individual households to the Head of Housing and Directorate Governance.

**BACKGROUND:**

At its meeting of 2 February 2016 the Executive considered a report concerning the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. The Executive resolved:

- (1) that officers be authorised to respond to Government confirming that North Somerset Council would be willing to take part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme and provide accommodation and support initially for up to 3 households comprising immediate families with young children or vulnerable older people;*
- (2) that decision making regarding entering into agreements with Government to facilitate North Somerset Councils participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme be delegated to the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Leader of the Council;*
- (3) that officers regularly review the potential to take additional households in the light of the Council's experience of accommodating and supporting the initial households, and the decision regarding the number of additional refugees to be accommodated in North Somerset in the future be delegated to the Director of People and Communities, in consultation with the Leader of the Council; and*
- (4) that refugees be housed in existing or new build affordable housing for rent or private rented sector accommodation depending on availability and suitability.*

Subsequently Government were informed of the Councils willingness to take part in the scheme and further work is being undertaken to source 3 properties to accommodate refugee households.

Authorisation is now required in relation to North Somerset Councils participation in the scheme. No formal agreements need to be entered into with Government other than confirming the acceptance of households who are matched by Government to properties offered by the council, on a case by case basis. In making a decision the council is required to consult with the CCG. The council also needs to confirm that it is able to deliver a statement of outcomes for each household.

The funding arrangements are set out in 'Funding Instructions' issued jointly by the Home Office, DfID and DCLG (one covering the first 12 months from the refugees arrival into the UK and one covering the following 4 years). Funding Instructions are issued annually and funding levels may be reviewed and varied by Government from time to time. The funding levels set out below for future years should therefore be regarded as indicative.

In summary, as set out in the Executive report, the council would receive funding of £8,520 per person for the first 12 months following the refugees' arrival to meet the costs incurred in delivering the statement of outcomes. If additional costs are incurred in 'compelling circumstances' in relation to educational (children under the age of 18) or social care needs the council will be able to apply for additional funding. This is a slight revision to the arrangements reported to the Executive as Special Educational Needs funding was originally set at a minimum of £1000 per child where this was needed (with the facility to apply for additional funding). In addition it has also been confirmed that in the first year the council will receive £4,500 for each child aged 5-18 years and £2,250 for each child aged 3 or 4 towards the costs of education/early years provision (in subsequent years funding will be through the normal education funding regime). Health costs for year 1 will be met through a separate agreement between Government and the CCG.

The funding instruction for years 2-5 has recently been issued by Government and the details are in line with those reported to the Executive. In summary funding will taper from £5,000 per person in year 2 to £3,700 in year 3, £2,300k in year 4 and £1,000k in year 5. Funding (subject to periodic review by Government) is also made available to meet additional essential costs incurred by the council over and above what could be regarded as normal expenditure. The Funding Instruction states that Government expect that this will be predominantly used to fund exceptional social care costs and that the council would need to apply for such funding on a case by case basis.

In the light of the above authority is sought accept up to 3 Syrian refugee households and to delegate decision making on individual cases to the Head of Housing and Directorate Governance

**Reasons:**

To enable up to 3 Syrian Refugee households to be accommodated and supported

**Options Considered:**

Not taking part in this scheme would mean that Syrian refugees would not be able to be relocated to North Somerset.

**Financial Implications:**

It is anticipated that the funding provided by Government in the first year would be sufficient to cover the costs involved. There is some risk that the income from Government over the 5 year period does not cover costs however Government have provided an exceptional costs fund to provide additional support for the most vulnerable persons which could help mitigate any shortfall which will otherwise need to be covered through mainstream expenditure.

**Implications for Future Years:**

Refugees are granted a five year humanitarian protection visa which will entitle them to access to public funds/services, access the labour market and the possibility of a family reunion. Funding will be provided for the 5 year period as set out above.

Reviewed:  .....

Mark Hughes  
Head of Housing and Directorate Governance

Dated: 19/10/2016 .....

Signed:  .....

Sheila Smith  
Director, People and Communities

Dated: 19.10.16 .....

