



**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

**REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT**

**REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Council Executive with an update on the refugee resettlement programme and related issues.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council Executive notes the update on the refugee resettlement programme.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, making best use of resources, working in partnership.
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	Resource implications are at this stage unquantified, however the UK Government have confirmed levels of funding that would be provided on a case by case basis.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	Not applicable
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	Members of the Corporate Management Team and related senior officers

## **D TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

At the Council Executive meeting on 15 September 2015, committee considered a report from officers on the UK Government and Scottish Government response to date on the refugee crisis in Syria, the preliminary works being undertaken by COSLA to coordinate a Scottish Local government position on the issue, and the council actions to date.

Committee instructed officers to continue to liaise with COSLA, the Scottish Government, UK Government and CPP partners and to report back on measures proposed to facilitate West Lothian taking a share of refugees coming to Scotland.

Reports to committee between 13 October 2015 and 22 December 2015 have provided further updates on developments at a national level and the measures being progressed at a local level.

### **D.2 Resettlement Programme Update**

#### *The Home Office*

The council has submitted accommodation details to the Home Office and is currently awaiting receipt of the case summaries. Officers are expecting early confirmation and on receipt the council will review in order to determine the range of support services required to accommodate the refugees offered by the Home Office.

The Home Office have confirmed that flights are scheduled in February 2016 and March 2016, with further flights during the rest of the calendar year. As previously intimated the lead time is normally 6 weeks and as such officers are currently planning for arrivals during March 2016.

#### *Syrian Refugee Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) Officer Group*

The officer working group established to ensure that the council has the appropriate provisions in place for families to settle in West Lothian comprises of officers from Housing, Social Policy, Corporate Communications, Education, Area Services (Advice Shop) and Finance

At this stage the main focus of activity has been on the confirmation of the accommodation and liaison with the Home Office on this matter. Discussions are also ongoing with other local authorities that have received refugees from earlier arrivals.

On receipt of the case summaries, officers will progress the full range of required support arrangements and services that will be required to accommodate the accepted refugees. Other partner agencies including Police Scotland, NHS Lothian, and the Voluntary Sector will also be involved at appropriate stages.

### **D.3 Scottish Refugee Council**

There are many aspects and issues to consider for the resettlement and integration of the refugees arriving in Scotland for a period of at least 5 years, and local services and communities will also need to be supported as they receive, welcome and integrate refugees.

The Scottish Refugee Council offers specialist support, services and consultancy in the settling and integration of refugees into Scotland. These include;

- Support from their refugee integration services which work with individuals on all aspects of their settlement
- Community engagement and integration services which help in longer term integration of communities
- Training for staff and others on refugee issues and how to support communities
- Policy and media consultancy

Specifically, the Scottish Refugee Council has experience of running community events to inform and prepare communities to receive refugees and creating space for issues of concern to be raised and responded to. This aspect of the range of services offered is the main area where elected member participation could be envisaged.

Officers have had preliminary discussions on the range of services and support that would be available and it is envisaged that the council will engage with the Scottish Refugee Council. Further discussions will be held with the Scottish Refugee Council and other Voluntary Sector Organisations following receipt of the case summaries.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The council's response to the refugee resettlement programme is consistent with the position taken by all other local authorities. Discussions are ongoing with the Home Office and the council is expecting early confirmation of the case summaries. Thereafter arrangements will be put in place for the first tranche of refugees arriving in West Lothian by the end of March 2016.

Appendices/Attachments: None

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