



## **CABINET – 9TH DECEMBER 2015**

**SUBJECT: SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In response to the humanitarian emergency in Syria the UK Government has announced that over the next 4/5 years up to 20,000 Syrians will be accepted into the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Local Authorities have been asked to consider participating in the Scheme with an additional request for “trailblazer” local authorities to come forward who would be willing to accept some families before Christmas.
- 2.2 Local Authorities would be expected to ensure that arrivals are provided with suitable accommodation and that the specific needs of these vulnerable individuals are met. Central Government will meet the costs of the arrivals in terms of orientation support, health and education costs for the first year from arrival. The intention is that properties would be sourced from within the private rented sector in localities where relevant support services and networks can be accessed. Cabinet are asked to approve participation in this Scheme.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Putting arrangements in place to resettle and support those subject to international humanitarian crises supports the following Well-being Goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- A Wales of cohesive communities;
  - A globally responsible Wales.

### **4. THE REPORT**

#### **The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**

- 4.1 The United Nations estimates that as of February 2015 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid within Syria. At least 7.6 million people in Syria have been forced to flee their homes and there are some 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) was launched in January 2014, and is the first resettlement programme run by the UK to target support for refugees specifically on the basis of their vulnerability. Since the first arrivals in March 2014 to the end of June 2015, 216 people were relocated to the UK under the SVPRS. With the Prime Minister’s recent

announcement of the UK taking up to 20,000 persons to be resettled over the next 4/5 years this programme will need to rapidly scale up and Local Authorities have been invited to participate in the scheme.

- 4.2 Individuals identified by UNHCR are allowed to bring their immediate family with them. This is limited to one spouse / partner (who must be over 18) and their minor dependant children (under 18 and not living an independent life). There is no provision to allow applicants to bring over-age dependant relatives unless they also meet the vulnerability criteria in their own right or the Home Office is satisfied that there is an existing dependency. The SVPRS prioritises help for survivors of torture and violence, women and children at risk, and those in need of medical care.
- 4.3 Medical reports are produced by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in advance of arrival. All applicants (including accompanying family members) are subject to the usual immigration checks and screening prior to a visa being granted. Those with a criminal past or links to war crimes or extremism are excluded from the scheme.
- 4.4 Those who are accepted under the SVPRS are granted humanitarian protection giving them leave to remain for 5 years with full access to employment and public funds and rights to family reunion comparable to refugees. At the end of the 5 years, if they have not been able to return to Syria, they may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK. Settlement may be refused if the person is convicted of a criminal offence during their leave and will be refused if they pose a danger to the public, or to national security. Leave to remain can also be curtailed if such evidence comes to light during the initial 5 year period. Settlement can be revoked if evidence emerges after it has been granted.
- 4.5 Local Authorities participating in the scheme are asked to take the lead in working with other key local partners to ensure that arrivals are provided with suitable accommodation and the specific needs of these vulnerable individuals are met. This includes working with education and housing providers, for example, and liaising with the Health Board and through them primary and secondary healthcare providers. Some Local Authorities commission the voluntary sector to deliver orientation services whilst others deliver this in-house. Consideration will also need to be given to bringing in specialist support providers subject to individuals' specific requirements.
- 4.6 Central Government will meet the costs of the arrivals in terms of orientation support, health and education costs for the first year from arrival. Staffing costs to cover administration of the scheme will also be met. The Home Office have adopted a unit cost approach whereby local authorities can be flexible between elements of the unit cost and pool them (i.e. to offset overspends in one area with underspends in another). The Home Office also state that while a uniform approach is needed to deliver the scheme as quickly and effectively as possible, there will be instances where further discussion may be necessary and some costs effectively topped up by the Home Office. A breakdown of the unit costs is provided in Appendix 1. Where families are granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and chose to settle in Caerphilly County Borough they will have the same statutory entitlements as any other resident. Year two to five funding will be allocated on a tariff basis over four years, tapering from £5,000 per person in year two to £1,000 per person in year five.
- 4.7 Local authority costs cover management of the scheme, housing, and cultural integration including English language provision. There is an element included in the local authority costs for social care also – any cases where social care costs cannot be accommodated within this figure would need to be topped up separately by making a case to the Home Office. For Special Educational Needs, the provision is expected to cover an assessment, and any specific needs identified would then need topping up separately per child. Medical care costs are split into two – the cost of registering a new arrival with a GP, and secondary medical costs for refugees with more serious medical needs, which are potentially more expensive. The Home Office advise that legitimate costs above this would be covered. Benefits are paid directly by the Home Office to the DWP and health costs are paid directly to relevant health bodies.

- 4.8 The Home Office have approached Local Authorities with a request that they consider participating in the Scheme and are in addition seeking confirmation of those who would wish to participate as “trailblazers” accommodating Syrian families prior to Christmas. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, has advised the Home Office that the Council does wish to be considered for the “trailblazer” phase. Officers are liaising with the Home Office in relation to this and are in the process of sourcing appropriate properties from the private sector. Consideration is being given to localities in the south of the county borough as it is considered that proximity to any existing support networks within the cities of Newport and Cardiff will be beneficial. Discussions are also taking place with a third sector provider regarding provision of other support services.
- 4.9 Initial consideration is being given to resettling 2 Syrian families before Christmas. It is not possible to specify numbers of people that might be resettled within the county borough going forward, but it is expected that overall numbers are likely to be low. The number and profile of families will be subject to the availability of suitable accommodation and capacity within relevant support services such as education and health, for example. Members are asked to approve this initial and on going participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the category identified in Section 8 of the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan. There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Central Government will meet the costs of the arrivals in terms of orientation support, health and education costs for the first year from arrival under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Staffing costs to cover administration of the scheme will also be met. The Home Office have adopted a unit cost approach whereby local authorities can be flexible between elements of the unit cost and pool them. CCBC costs incurred in support of the refugee relocation scheme should in the main be funded from the Central Government unit cost reimbursement scheme as noted in Appendix 1. Year two to five funding will be allocated on a tariff basis over four years, tapering from £5,000 per person in year two to £1,000 per person in year five.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Cabinet approve participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To enable the Council to respond to the humanitarian emergency in Syria.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 & 2000.

Author: Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection  
Consultees: Cllr Keith Reynolds, Leader of the Council  
Chris Burns, Chief Executive  
Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
Howard Rees, Programme Manager - Partnership Development and Collaborative Improvement  
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager  
Shaun Watkins, Human Resources Manager  
David A. Thomas Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)  
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Kath Peters, Community Safety Manager  
Chris Hunt, Community Cohesion Coordinator (West Gwent)  
Sam Crane, Head of Partnerships and Networks, ABUHB  
Dr. Gill Richardson, Executive Director of Public Health  
Chief Inspector Nick McClain, Gwent Police

Background Papers:

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme – Home Office Statement of Requirements

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme – Unit Costs