

For publication

Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme (EC00)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	<i>17th May 2016</i>
Cabinet portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing with Governance and Housing as consultees
Report by:	Policy and Communications Manager

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To consider participation in the national Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Chesterfield Borough Council agrees to take part in the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme.
- 2.2 That Chesterfield Borough Council formally joins the Derbyshire SVPRS partnership and agrees to Derbyshire County Council acting as lead partner for this scheme.
- 2.3 That up to six Chesterfield Borough Council housing properties can be utilised for the scheme.
- 2.4 That Chesterfield Borough Council agrees to contribute £2,000 to assist the partnership with set up costs.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The United Nations estimates that as of February 2015, 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid within Syria. More than 7.7 million people have been forced to flee their homes and there are some 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries. The SVPRS is a Government resettlement programme to relocate to the UK 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.
- 3.2 The scheme prioritises help for survivors of torture and violence, and women and children at risk or in need of medical care. This will include families (with both parents) and women and children at risk cases (single parent families, female headed). Those eligible for the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme (SVPRS) will bring their immediate family with them. Generally families will comprise of two to six people.
- 3.3 Those accepted would be processed in one of the existing United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees camps and granted leave to remain in the UK for five years with access to employment and public funds including benefits. At the end of the five years if they are unable to return to Syria they may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK.

4.0 A partnership approach for Derbyshire and the East Midlands

- 4.1 At the East Midlands Migration Board meeting in November 2015, all authorities in the East Midlands were asked to formally consider taking part in the SVPRS.
- 4.2 Nottingham city council, Nottinghamshire county council and the Nottinghamshire districts were the first areas within the East Midlands to take part in the scheme. They developed a partnership to facilitate the resettlement of 17 family units during December 2015. East Midlands Councils and the Nottinghamshire partnership have been keen to share their knowledge and experience of the scheme so far and Derbyshire has benefitted greatly from this when considering involvement.
- 4.3 In December 2015 Derbyshire County Council convened a meeting with relevant partner organisations including all Derbyshire districts, Derby City Council, Police, Fire and Rescue and Clinical Commissioning Groups. The lead officer for migration at East

Midlands Councils also attended. At the meeting all partners around the table were keen to develop a partnership approach to the scheme.

- 4.4 Since the initial meeting work has been undertaken by the districts to establish potential locations, numbers and size of suitable housing available for the scheme. Derbyshire County Council then mapped the other scheme requirements including access to school places, dental care, GP surgeries, post offices etc. This process indicated that up to 12 family units could be resettled in Derbyshire over two phases (family units are between two and six individuals so it is likely that between 50 – 60 Syrian refugees will be resettled).
- 4.5 Up to six Chesterfield Borough Council houses could be made available as a potential accommodation contribution to the partnership. However not all locations are likely to meet the scheme requirement and several other Derbyshire authorities are taking part in the scheme, therefore the number utilised is likely to be between three or four.
- 4.6 It is proposed that Derbyshire County Council act as the single point of contact and lead partner for the scheme. This will include:
- Single point of contact for the Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and East Midlands Councils regional co-ordination
 - Management and co-ordination of the programme including the financial arrangements
 - Procurement of scheme support – includes orientation for refugees, tailored case worker support, English as a second language (ESOL) provision, community and voluntary sector engagement etc.

5.0 Financial considerations

- 5.1 At the East Midlands Councils learning event in February 2016, further information was available about the financial settlement for the five year scheme. Initially a one year settlement was agreed by the Government but after extensive lobbying activity a five year funding programme has been agreed to ensure that the full scheme is funded.

5.2 The Derbyshire partnership has reviewed this financial information and considered the experiences of the Nottinghamshire partnership to develop a cost model. The scheme should be cost neutral to all authorities once the refugees have arrived in the UK, however pump priming money will be required to facilitate the planning stage. Co-ordination and management costs will be covered by the Government funding formula once the scheme is up and running.

5.3 All partners have been asked to contribute to these costs with a suggested contribution of £2,000 per district authority. It will not be possible to claim this money back.

6.0 Risk management

6.1 The main risks associated with the proposals are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Although all families for resettlement will have initial assessments, it is however possible that some needs will not become apparent until the family is in the UK.	Medium	Medium	Partnership approach provides flexibility to locating refugees or relocating refugees to the most suitable locations and/or accommodation to suit specific needs. Improvements are being made to the initial assessments following learning from phase 1 of the scheme.	Low	Low
All families will have the right to reunion i.e. dependants are entitled to join	Medium	Medium	Potential dependants should be noted on the application form.	Medium	Low

<p>them. This poses a financial risk to the council and other organisations involved in providing services. Dependants may have needs and a right to draw on local authority provided services.</p>			<p>This risk has been considered in developing the number of family units which the partnership believes Derbyshire can support.</p>		
<p>There is also a risk to the reputation of the council if refugees are not adequately supported which could reach a national level of attention.</p>	High	Medium	<p>Partnership approach provides resilience to support requirements.</p> <p>Learning from phase 1 experience.</p> <p>Improvements are being made to the initial assessments following learning from phase 1 of the scheme.</p>	Low	Low
<p>Costs exceed the modelling at a family level would be a financial risk for the council.</p>	Medium	Medium	<p>Partnership approach limits the liability of individual authorities.</p> <p>Learning has been incorporated from phase 1 of the programme to the Derbyshire financial model.</p> <p>Government funding has been confirmed for the 5 year scheme.</p>	Low	Low
<p>Concerns of</p>	Medium	High	<p>Refugees will go</p>	Low	Medium

<p>residents regarding security and equitable access to services.</p>			<p>through a number of enhanced national level security checks to ensure that there is no known risk to community safety. The police are involved in national systems for on-going support and monitoring of those resettled.</p> <p>Where possible Council housing properties in harder to let locations will be used in this scheme to minimise the impact on housing allocations.</p> <p>Properties in areas where GP surgeries, NHS dentists and schools are oversubscribed will not be used as part of this scheme.</p>		
<p>Although there is significant goodwill and a wish to help these refugees in the community there is also a small risk of victimisation or harassment for any new arrivals.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The location of resettled refugees will not be made public.</p> <p>Enhanced fire safety checks will be made by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue service.</p> <p>Derbyshire constabulary are a key member of the Derbyshire partnership.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>

7.0 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced and is attached at appendix 1.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 That Chesterfield Borough Council agrees to take part in the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme.

8.2 That Chesterfield Borough Council formally joins the Derbyshire SVPRS partnership and agrees to Derbyshire County Council acting as lead partner for this scheme.

8.3 That up to six Chesterfield Borough Council housing properties can be utilised for the scheme.

8.4 That Chesterfield Borough Council agrees to contribute £2,000 to assist the partnership with set up costs.

9.0 Reasons for recommendations

9.1 To contribute to the UK response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Decision information

Key decision number	623
Wards affected	ALL

Document information

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Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	Equality impact assessment