

# NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

## CABINET

DATE: 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2016

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### ASYLUM SEEKER & REFUGEE DISPERSAL

**Report of the** Acting Director of Local Services and Housing, Paul Jones

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Allan Hepple – Economic Growth

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#### Purpose of report

1. To update Members on activity undertaken by the multi-agency Asylum Seeker & Refugee Working Group, established following agreement at Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016.
2. To obtain member agreement of the proposal that will be put forward to the Home Office to support the accommodation of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Northumberland, including those presenting under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS)
3. To obtain member agreement of the formation of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team to then enable the implementation of the agreed proposal.

#### Recommendations

**It is recommended that:**

- **Cabinet note the report and agree the proposals and process, including the formation of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team, to support the number of Asylum Seekers and Refugees to be received under the SVPRS and agree support for the broader dispersal of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.**
- **Cabinet agree the proposal as set out at point 10 within the report, that will be put forward to the Home Office to support the accommodation of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Northumberland, including those presenting under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS)**

#### Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to both the Places and Environment and the Stronger Communities and Families priorities included in the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2013-2017

## Key issues

1. The Home Office require offers of assistance to Asylum Seekers and Refugees from all areas including Syria from those willing to help and confirmation of any numbers each Local Authority can identify.
2. Northumberland County Council has not previously been an asylum dispersal area as the Home Office contractor, G4S has chosen not to identify accommodation in the county (rather than NCC refusing to offer support). Widening dispersal in Northumberland is now being considered by G4S.
3. As there is a lack of existing infrastructure and experience in providing an effective offer, NCC will need to ensure that we can provide effective support to the scheme to resettle refugees.
4. A proposal has been developed to enable an offer to be submitted to the Home Office for support for receiving refugees under the SVPRS. This will require a dedicated team and budget to enable successful implementation and a safe day one position for refugee arrival.

## Background

1. The Home Office have two distinct schemes for Asylum seekers and refugees;
  - a) General dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees – contracted service with G4S to source accommodation and provide limited support. No financial support to Local Authority areas where dispersal takes place.
  - b) The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPRS) – placement arrangements are made directly with the Local Authority who sources accommodation and provides all support. A financial package is available with this scheme (detailed below).
2. Following approval of Cabinet in January 2016 a multi-agency Asylum Seeker & Refugee Working Group was formed. The Terms of Reference of this group are included below. This group has considered best practice from other councils in formulating the proposal and also considered;
  - what would be our capacity as a stock holding authority in terms of accommodation
  - what support could be offered to those we take and how would this be managed.
  - how suitable support services and infrastructure can be developed
3. Under the SVPRS people will arrive with refugee status for 5 years, which it is envisaged will be renewed. **The costs for support will be met through Central Government for Year One.** The Home Office would be looking to resettle approximately 400 per month across the Country. Agreed costs from Central Government for Year One are as follows:

Local Authority Costs	£8,520 per person
Education (age 3-4)	£2,250
Education (age 5-18)	£4,500
Special Educational Needs (age 3-18)	£1,000
DWP Benefits (Adult Claimant)	£12,000
Primary Medical Care	£200 per person
Secondary Medical Care	£2,000 per person

- Local Authority costs include social care costs at £520 per head. These funds are paid directly to the Local Authority upon application.
  - Education costs are paid to the Department for Education directly.
  - Funds for Special Educational Needs (support for language learning or other educational requirements) would be paid directly to the Local Authority.
  - The Home Office will pay DWP costs directly to them.
  - Medical Care costs would be paid directly to the Department of Health.
4. Reception and ground travel costs to the receiving area, void costs for securing accommodation (as well as adaptation & furnishings) and cash & clothing allowances are expected to be funded for the £8,520 Local Authority award.
5. **Under the SVPRS** Local Authorities need to provide the following;
- Arrangements to meet new arrivals at the airport
  - Housing and basic furnishings
  - 12 months wrap around support
  - Appropriate health care including registering with a GP and addressing other health needs
  - ESOL and cultural orientation
  - Psychological support
  - Support to ensure that welfare benefits are in place
6. In November 2015 the Home Office confirmed that additional funding of £12,000 per person overall will be provided for years two to five, allocated on a tariff basis over 4 years as follows;
- Year 2           £5,000 per person
  - Year 3           £3,700 per person
  - Year 4           £2,300 per person
  - Year 5           £1,000 per person

There will also be support for health & education in years two to five which will be funded separately to the Local Authority tariff. Funding will not be ring-fenced and can be pooled and managed across all refugees the council accommodates.

7. To ensure the scheme is successful NCC will need to:
- Manage expectations of the families, communities and wider partners and stakeholders
  - Focus on the integration of families into schools and communities
  - Have the right partners in place to ensure that the process is proactively and positively supported and managed
  - Ensure that the Northumberland scheme is well planned and that communication is effective.
  - Ensure that front line staff working with the families are experienced, trained, flexible and dedicated
8. The proposal is that a dedicated team be established to work with Asylum Seekers & Refugees and will enable Northumberland to support the relocation of this group long term. The proposal is for new resource to be provided rather than resource being drawn from existing services.
9. It is considered that by supporting the SVPRS and establishing a dedicated team the Council will be better placed to work effectively with G4S in the placement of

asylum seekers and refugees under the widening dispersal scheme which is being developed alongside the SVPRS.

10. The proposal is that the Council make an offer to the Home Office under the SVPRS. The Council will undertake to accept **4** families (16 people) at any one time, with a rolling programme of arrival every **4** months of a further **4** families. This will equate to **12** families (approximately 48 people based upon 4 people per family) being accepted each year. Over a 5 year period the Council would therefore support **60** families and **240** people under this scheme. This would be in addition to any people placed under the widening dispersal scheme.
11. Based upon a family of 4 (2 adults & 2 children both of school age) the Council would receive £36,080<sup>1</sup> per family in year one. This equates to £144,320 for each cohort of families received. Annually the Council would receive funding under the SVPRS of **£432, 960** in year one from the Home Office to receive 12 families.
12. A costed proposal over the rolling period of the scheme (a total of 9 years) has determined that the annual costs to establish and run the service will be covered by funding provided by the Home Office, with any surplus in years 1 to 5 used to support years 6 to 9 of the scheme when family numbers, and therefore income, has reduced. In addition the surplus will support any property adaptations that are identified as being required and therefore safeguard the existing Disabled Facilities Grant pot and not disadvantage existing DFG applicants. Additional running costs such as recruitment, fuel & mileage incurred as part of the initial set up should also be supported through the surplus though as funds are claimed in arrears initial set up costs will be incurred.
13. The areas in which the refugees will be placed have been reviewed and the following factors considered;
  - Location of suitable, available council-owned properties
  - Availability of primary and secondary education school places
  - Transport links
  - Availability of existing Community Services
  - Neighbourhood Policing intelligence
  - Employment opportunities
  - GP availability

Following the review Cramlington has been identified as suitable for the first tranche of placements. This will be the primary area with Cowpen, Blyth to be considered for any future, wider dispersal.

14. Other areas of the County can be considered when services have been established in primary areas and opportunities then arise for further expansion of the scheme.

## **Background papers**



Home Office Briefing  
SVPRS



Working Group TOR

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<sup>1</sup> Calculated as £8,520 per person and 2 x £1,000 SEN per child, both paid directly to the LA

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	There are no direct implications to policies within the Council. The support for the SVPRS will in fact support the delivery of objectives and priorities within the Corporate Plan and the Housing Strategy 2013-2018
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There will be initial set up costs to the Council associated with meeting the requirement of the SVPRS as funds are claimed retrospectively; However a costed proposal over the rolling period of the scheme has determined that the annual costs to establish and run the service will be covered by funding provided by the Home Office.
<b>Legal</b>	The families will have legal status therefore there are no legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	The formation of a new team will require recruitment of new personnel or redeployment of existing personnel.
<b>Property</b>	Accommodation for families will be identified from Council-owned residential general needs accommodation.
<b>Equalities</b>  (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Equality has been considered and no issues have been determined
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	A risk assessment for both the families arriving and the communities in which they will be placed will be completed as part of the NCC Scheme development
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Northumbria Police and Public protection will be involved in the development of the scheme to enable consideration to be given to any implications regarding Crime & Disorder.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	A Communication Plan will be developed to ensure that customers remain informed.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Wards</b>	Cramlington & Blyth

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that relevant officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	initials
Finance Officer	SM
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	KA
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Director	PJ
Cabinet member(s)	AH

**Author and Contact Details**

Report Author:

Julie Young

Housing Services Manager

01670 623076

[Julie.young03@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.young03@northumberland.gov.uk)