

 Executive 28 November 2018		Agenda Item No. 9
Title	Support for Government Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme	
For further information about this report please contact	Lisa Barker Head of Housing Services Telephone: 01926 456403 Email: lisa.barker@warwickdc.gov.uk Mark Lingard Private Sector Housing Manager Telephone: 01926 456410 Email: mark.lingard@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	Not known at this stage	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive 6 April 2016 Minute 133	
Background Papers	Executive report 6 April 2016	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	TBC
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	06/11/18	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	25/10/18	Lisa Barker
CMT	06/11/18	Chris Elliott
Section 151 Officer	06/11/18	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	06/11/18	Andrew Jones
Finance	30/10/18	Andrew Rollins
Portfolio Holder(s)	30/10/18	Peter Phillips
Consultation & Community Engagement		
N/A		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Government asked local authorities in March 2016 to consider assisting with resettling Syrian Refugees, to help it meet its commitment of finding homes for 20,000 by 2020. By the end of 2017 Warwick District Council successfully met its original commitment to rehouse five families, three years ahead of schedule, and approval is sought to assist with the resettling of upto five further families within the remaining life of the scheme.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That dependent on the continuation of the properly funded arrangements in place to manage and settle refugees, Warwick District Council approves for the resettlement of up to a further five families within the remaining life of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 The Council has expressed a willingness to offer further support to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
- 3.2 Whilst the scheme was originally going to run until 2020 the Home Office have recently brought forward the timescale so the scheme will now end in December 2019. There is on going consultation about what will replace the current scheme.
- 3.3 The time limiting of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, with partners not able to access government funding for families arriving after December 2019, severely restricts the ability to assist further families. It is highly likely that Warwick District Council would not meet a firm commitment to resettle five families in such a short time. Therefore the report recommends a commitment to assist up to a further five families within the remaining life of the scheme.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

"The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects."

"The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy."

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy

met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
Sourcing good quality housing within the private rented sector helps ensure housing needs for all are met	None	None
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal Arabic speaking support workers are employed by WCC to help resettle the families.	None	None

4.2 Supporting Strategies

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2020 includes an objective to support people to maintain, manage and maintain their housing. The families who have been resettled in Warwickshire meet with and help each other and further families would help this support network, helping to create sustainable communities.

4.3 Changes to Existing Policies

There are no changes.

4.4 Impact Assessments

Refugees may have specific support needs but these will be known before the families are resettled. Managing need once in the district will be part of the planned support package.

Because of the small numbers involved the impact on local communities is likely to be low. There is a multi-agency approach across the county to support the families and deal with any potential impacts.

5. Budgetary Framework

Funding for the costs of the scheme and the support for the families is provided by the government and Warwickshire County Council administers this funding across the county.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The ability to secure good quality private rented accommodation at below market rent is a very significant challenge given the limited window of opportunity before the current scheme ends and is another reason only to commit to up to five families
- 6.2 The cost of housing in this area is a factor which presents a risk in relation to the funding available from Government. Whilst the funds may be sufficient for some areas of the country the high cost of housing may put pressure on how the scheme is managed.
- 6.3 The intention is to continue to work with the sub-regional group to share experience and practice and to monitor the financial position. The key to the long term sustainability of accommodation in the private sector will be family members gaining employment.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 The authority could choose not to re-settle any further refugees. However, this stance is likely to come under pressure from local groups supporting the scheme and the broader humanitarian situation.

8. Background

- 8.1 The Syrian refugee situation remains a major humanitarian crisis. The Government has responded to this by pledging to resettle 20,000 people from United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) camps.
- 8.2 Local authorities in the UK have been asked to make pledges as to how many refugees they can settle within their areas. Warwick District Council has been successful in meeting its commitment early and there is some scope to try and help further families.
- 8.3 The West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (who act on behalf of the Government in the region) and Warwickshire County Council who administer the scheme in Warwickshire have indicated their support, including funding, for Warwick District Council to resettle up to five families before the end of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
- 8.4 Following the resettlement of the original five families arrangements and processes have become more embedded within Warwickshire, particularly the Arabic speaking support worker service, and this will help in the resettlement of further families.