

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING	5 TH NOVEMBER 2019	5
GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

This report provides details of the new Global Resettlement Scheme which sets out the Governments ongoing commitment to resettlement refugees. The priority will be to continue to resettle the most vulnerable refugees and broad the geographical focus beyond the Middle East and North Africa region. The new Global resettlement Program will be very similar to the current programmes delivered in Lancashire, with the noticeable difference that it will consolidate all current resettlement programmes. A new process for emergency resettlement will also be developed, allowing the UK to respond quickly to instances of heightened protection need, providing a faster route to protection where lives are at risk.

The Refugee Integration Team at LCC is willing to coordinate a Lancashire wide response to the new Global Resettlement Scheme, building on the successes of the Lancashire Resettlement Programme in order to make the resettlement process as efficient, effective and seamless as possible.

The Integration team is also willing to take some of the current responsibilities shouldered by district councils including sourcing housing and other property-related requirement, commissioning casework support and managing the local integration fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to:

1. Confirm if Fylde Council wish to be part of a new 4 year cycle of refugee resettlement in Lancashire, under the Global Resettlement Scheme, and if so, confirm how many families the Council will pledge to resettle over that cycle and provide a preference as to when to resettle them
2. Confirm if the Committee wishes for Lancashire County Council to take responsibility, in partnership with Fylde, for (either or all):
 - a. Sourcing housing and other property-related requirements such as furnishing (subject to inspection and approval of Fylde Housing Officers)
 - b. Commissioning casework support
 - c. Managing the Local Integration Fund

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

In 2015 Government made a Commitment to the Syrian Refugee Programme (SRP) to accommodate 20,000 Syrian Refugee families whose claim for Asylum had been taken when outside of the UK, mainly in Syrian Refugee Camps over 5 years from 2015. Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) launched at the

same time as the Syrian Refugee Programme to assist vulnerable children and their families displaced in the migrant crisis.

The Lancashire Chief Executives Group have considered two pledges in relation to the Syrian Resettlement Programme considered by each authority:

1. In January 2016: to resettle 500 Syrian Refugee families
2. In September 2016: to resettle 75 refugees (including children and their families) under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Programme (VCRP)

At a meeting of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee on the 10th January 2017 Member considered a decision item on the Lancashire Syrian Refugee and Vulnerable Children and their Families Resettlement Programme.

It was RESOLVED to:

1. Note the contents of the report regarding the Asylum Seeker Wider Dispersal Programme;
2. Note the contents of the report regarding the Lancashire Syrian Refugee families and Vulnerable Children and their families resettlement programmes;
3. Pledge that Fylde Council, under the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Resettlement Programmes, accommodate 5 families in 2019/20;
4. Commence negotiations with Lancashire County Council to establish how the available funding would be shared between Lancashire County Council and Fylde Council and how the various services are to be delivered and by which body; and
5. Note that a further report will be presented to update the committee on this matter during 2017/18.

Information Item, 3rd September 2019: Update on the Lancashire Syrian Resettlement Programme in Fylde - The committee received an update on the Lancashire Syrian Resettlement Programme and the 5 families resettled in St Annes and Kirkham in July 2019.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	✓
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	✓

REPORT

Global Resettlement Scheme

1. The UK Government has recently approached local authorities with plans for a Global Resettlement Programme. This will be very similar to the current programmes delivered in Lancashire, with the notable difference that it will consolidate all current resettlement programmes, including the Gateway Protection Programme and the much smaller Mandate scheme.
2. The government has confirmed that:
 - a. the new Global scheme will broaden the geographical focus beyond the Middle East and North Africa region
 - b. The funding structure for the first year of the new scheme (2020-2021) will be the same as that for the SRP/VCRS

- c. The pledge for the first year of the new scheme, in terms of numbers of refugees to be resettled, is similar to the current number resettled between all resettlement programmes – around 5,000 (both the funding structure and numbers for beyond 2020-2021 are subject to agreement from the Treasury, but it is understood that the government is looking to continue with the same numbers and funding structure from 2021)
 - d. The Community Sponsorship scheme (through which three families have already been resettled in Lancashire) will continue
 - e. A new process for emergency resettlement will be developed
3. The government hopes that LAs currently delivering refugee resettlement continue to support refugees under the new scheme, and that new LAs make pledges as well.

Options for Lancashire

- 4. Despite the Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme being close to resettling its last cohort in the SRP/VCRS, the long term integration work is just beginning. Around 100 families have been resettled in Lancashire so far. The active participation of dozens of families in Refugee Week activities provide strong evidence that most families are settling in well and wish to integrate successfully in their communities in Lancashire. Many refugees have found work or started businesses, and most refugee children are doing well in school. Equally important, effective partnership work now has developed between LAs and the Third Sector, and in the next 2 years Lancashire will experience a significant development in the infrastructure for supporting refugees and asylum seekers, including wellbeing, employment, community services, and services for families, women, and young people.
- 5. The Resettlement Programme has been a very good example of LAs and local partners from different areas working together, with many refugee families establishing networks across Lancashire and beyond. Some of our delivery models and initiatives have been recognised as good practice by the Home Office.
- 6. The Refugee Integration Team at Lancashire County council has recently carried out a review of the services that the Programme currently provides. The review looked at resource allocation, financial implications, outcomes etc., and covered:
 - a. Sourcing of houses for the Programme
 - b. Casework support
 - c. Bespoke ESOL lessons
 - d. Interpreting and translation services
 - e. The Local Integration Fund
 - f. Integration services: employment, wellbeing, community development, etc.
 - g. Coordination and management
 - h. Engagement and communication

The final report and outcomes from the review are included as an appendix to this Committee report.

- 7. The Refugee Integration Team at LCC is willing to coordinate a response to the new Global Resettlement Scheme, as they did back in 2016, with the assistance and guidance from regional colleagues in the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP). This will build on successes in order to make the resettlement process, from both an LA perspective and that of outcomes for refugees, as efficient, effective and seamless as possible.
- 8. The proposal from the Lancashire Refugee Integration Team is as follows:
 - a. For Lancashire LAs to continue to work together in a coordinated way as a Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme, pooling funding and resources across all LAs and across all cohorts to deliver consistency and develop both local and sub-regional infrastructure for refugee integration, providing the same ongoing support as until now.

- b. For the Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme to pledge to resettle 30 families each year (based on average family size so far, that would mean around 140 refugees, which is a fair and proportionate number that reflects the size of Lancashire's population in the UK).
 - c. To continue with the delivery model of resettling clusters of 5 families in each LA at a time, which have allowed LCC to allocate resources in an effective and efficient way, including casework support, bespoke ESOL lessons, interpreting, etc; in addition, to continue to resettle all clusters at once, in one large cohort arriving in the summer.
 - d. In previous years, pledges within Lancashire were made on a year on year basis. It is proposed that a more predictable rota is agreed from the start, whereby each LA would resettle 5 families every two years. This will follow a pattern based on this year's cohort, meaning that, next year (year 1 of the Global Scheme), it will be the turn of those LAs not involved with the 2019 Charter. This pattern would see Fylde Council resettling the first cohort of Global Refugees in 2021 and the second in 2023.
 - e. A review period is proposed in year 4 with participation beyond 2021 subject to confirmation that the national numbers and the funding structure of the Global scheme remain the same.
 - f. The pledge to the Home Office will stipulate that each LA cluster will consist of families from the same nationality to assist with the settlement and assimilation of the families in their new homes.
9. Although some LAs may wish to continue with the same practical role and responsibilities that they have now, the workload that participation in the Programme has created for some resettlement leads and their local colleagues has been vast. The Refugee Integration Team at LCC will be willing to take on some of the current responsibilities shouldered by the other LAs. Although the manner of such support is still to be determined, it could involve one or more of the following:
 - a. LCC would commission a separate service to source*, prepare and furnish houses. LAs would still have the responsibility of inspecting and approving properties, but all else would be the responsibility of this service, which would of course operate under strict (written) guidance from the Programme and the relevant LAs (e.g. where to source the houses, types of properties).

* For the 2019 Fylde cohort, the Fylde housing team provided 6 hours of support over a 6 month period (funded through the scheme), to source accommodation for the 5 families. In reality, this task was far more onerous and time consuming, with huge challenges in finding suitable houses and numerous issues to resolve before agreeing the tenancy. Although this funding period has now ended, the housing team are still regularly called upon to offer assistance to the families.
 - b. LCC would commission casework support** for those LAs who wish them to do so.

** For the 2019 Fylde cohort, LCC were commissioned to appoint a dedicated, bilingual case worker/interpreter where previously, local authorities had to appoint or commission resettlement case workers or organisations to work with the families within their area. Despite this support, Fylde officers were directly involved during the orientation process and continue to assist the case worker who has limited local knowledge. Officers also regularly attend meetings as part of the LRP Steering group and report on progress with regards to the resettlement process.
 - c. LCC would manage the Local Integration Fund ***for those LAs wishing them to do so.

*** £10,000 is allocated through the LIF per cluster of 5 families in each of years 1 and 2, to assist with projects aimed specifically at improving integration and Fylde officers are currently working in partnership with LCC and 3rd parties to identify opportunities in the local area.
10. At the same time, the Home Office, in partnership with the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership, have commissioned Serco to widen the dispersal of Asylum Seeker accommodation within local authority areas not previously affected. Within Fylde, Serco have commissioned three units of

accommodation for Asylum Seekers, while applications for Asylum are assessed and a decision regarding right to remain status made.

11. Serco and the Refugee programmes are competing for similar property types within Fylde; privately rented houses with 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms. Creating difficulties in the sourcing of accommodation in a high demand privately rented housing market.
12. A strategic approach under the Global Resettlement Programme would be to support Asylum Seekers, given Refugee status, to be included in this programme as they are currently based in Fylde following placement by the Home Office.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

13. Confirm if Fylde Council wish to be part of a new 4 year cycle of refugee resettlement in Lancashire, under the Global Resettlement Scheme, and if so, confirm how many families the Council will pledge to resettle over that cycle and provide a preference as to when to resettle them
14. Confirm if the Committee wishes for Lancashire County Council to take responsibility, in partnership with Fylde, for (either or all):
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IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no implications arising directly from the report with any related costs being met by funding from the Local Integration Fund.
Legal	There are no implications arising directly from the report
Community Safety	There are no implications arising directly from the report
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications arising directly from the report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	There are no implications arising directly from the report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications arising directly from the report

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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
N/A		

Attached documents

Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme, 2019 Review, Final Report