

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 10 APRIL 2017  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITY)

SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION SCHEME UPDATE

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Cabinet approved the terms of the resettlement of up to 10 Syrian refugees into the borough last year.
- 1.2 The council is working in partnership with the other Hertfordshire authorities to coordinate the arrival of families and with a charitable organisation to secure family sized homes to resettle families under the government's Syrian family resettlement programme
- 1.3 To meet a pressing need, the council is providing a home which has been adapted to meet the needs of a family with a disabled family member. This family will be arriving in May
- 1.4 Under the partnership arrangement described, we expect to resettle more families in the months to come.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Council note the content of this report.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 Officers have previously reported the partnership arrangement that has been agreed with a local charitable foundation, to secure suitable property to help in the resettlement of Syrian families. The legal arrangements have been finalised and the teams are working on the property acquisitions.
- 3.2 There is an increasing pressure to meet the specialist housing needs of families who are currently located within camps, and who have a disability. However very few councils have been able to provide accommodation which has the right adaptations to meet this need.
- 3.3 The council has a property in its ownership, which was not previously used as social housing stock, but is suitable for adaptations.
- 3.4 This property has been adapted (all costs are recoverable via central government grant) and will be ready for occupation within the next few weeks.
- 3.5 A Syrian family has been identified, and following a thorough process of confirming eligibility, medical assessment, visa application and finalising support arrangements, we are pleased to report they will be arriving in the country in May.

- 3.6 The refugee council and council officers are working together to prepare for their arrival and to ensure that all the required steps, including access to education, healthcare, language classes and other support is in place. Local voluntary groups have been very supportive in helping to meet the family's needs.

## **Implications**

### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report, as it is an update only.

### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 All costs incurred by the council associated with the resettlement are recoverable via government grant payments.

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The Home Office and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (NHCR) are conducting risk assessments prior to a person being accepted as eligible for assistance under this scheme.
- 6.2 The Refugee Council are very experienced in resettlement of refugees and by working in partnership with them via a Service Level Agreement, this provides significant control.
- 6.3 We continue to work in partnership with other Hertfordshire local authorities, which provides shared learning and pooling of resources.

### **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 The Home Office and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (NHCR) are conducting risk assessments prior to a person being accepted as eligible for assistance under this scheme.

### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

### **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

### **10 Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out in respect to this resettlement programme. In order to meet the needs of the resettled families the council has commissioned the refugee council to provide specialist support, including helping them access local services, providing access to language classes and to other community support.

10.2 The government sets out a Statement of Requirement which the council will have to comply with. This ensures that the needs of the families is met via the provision of support and signposting.

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Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

Cabinet Report 5 April 2016

Appendices to be listed