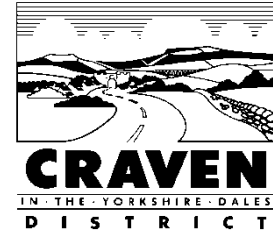


Policy Committee – 5th October 2016

SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT



Report of the Director of Services

Lead Member: Richard Foster

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of Report:

To inform members of the current position with regard to the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Craven and seek approval for Craven District Council to take part in the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme.

2. Recommendations – Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree to extend participation in resettlement schemes to include the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme
- 2.2 Pledge to achieve the total additional number for the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme of 3 as proposed by Migration Yorkshire subject to there being sufficient private sector housing available.

3. Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Update

- 3.1 In January 2016, Members agreed that Craven District Council would accept 25 refugees as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons resettlement scheme (SVP).
- 3.2 The first two families totally 11 refugees arrived in July 2016 and were housed in Skipton. Families are confirmed for arrival on flights in the Autumn (3 refugees) and New Year (10 refugees) and we anticipate having successfully completed our resettlement programme by March 2017.
- 3.3 Members also requested that the Chief Executive "carry out a detailed assessment of the capacity of Craven to respond greater than the Council has been asked to on compassionate grounds and report back to Policy Committee". Discussions have now taken place with North Yorkshire County Council and Migration Yorkshire who have advised that whilst there is an option for Craven to take additional numbers over the 25 that has been committed, it is likely to be April 2018 before this could take place. This is because the other local authorities in North Yorkshire have also committed to take a specified number of refugees for the region over the course of the programme, which is due to complete in April 2018 and is sufficient to house the number of refugees in the Home Office's current programme

- 3.4 However, the Council may be able to increase the number of refugees it accepts by agreeing to participate in a new resettlement scheme that has been recently launched by the Government.

4. **The Vulnerable Childrens Resettlement Scheme**

- 4.1 The Government has requested that Local Authorities consider increasing their current resettlement pledges to include the new Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme (VCRP) which was announced by the Immigration Minister on 21st April 2016: "The new scheme will be specifically tailored to support vulnerable and refugee children at risk and their families. Several hundred individuals will be resettled over the next year with a view of resettling up to 3,000 over the lifetime of this Parliament."
- 4.2 The 3,000 people will be identified by the UNHCR as falling under the 'children and adolescents at risk' category and referred into the UK programme. The scheme will be open to vulnerable children of all nationalities identified by the UNHCR from the Middle East and North Africa region.
- 4.3 The vast majority of the 3,000 will come in family units, with a small minority (about 5%) in units with carers who are not parents. This scheme does not include Unaccompanied Children.
- 4.4 The 3,000 people to be resettled under the VCRP will be in addition to the 20,000 Syrians Refugees that the Government has already agreed to accept, and the UK commitment will therefore increase to 23,000 people to be resettled over the lifetime of the Parliament. Local Authorities are being asked to extend their pledges under the Syrian scheme to also include the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Programme. In addition to total pledges, they are looking for Local Authorities to offer some early places in the Autumn.
- 4.6 Migration Yorkshire recommends that Yorkshire & Humber agrees to participate in VCRP and take our 'fair share' as a region. Based on our share of population this would equate to an extra 3 refugees for Craven, taking our total commitment to 28 which is an achievable figure. Members should note that it is unlikely that we would be in a position to accept families in the Autumn as we have no further properties identified at this point in time. The only way in which we may be able to take families in the Autumn would be to request assistance from social landlords, an option which members were previously reluctant to accept.
- 4.7 The process and funding for Local Authorities mirrors that of the Syrian resettlement programme. We would therefore sign up to a regional agreement with the County Council as the lead authority who will project manage the operational delivery of the scheme, including the procurement of specialist support services.

5. **Implications**

5.1 **Financial Implications.**

There are no cost implications to the Council of entering into the Vulnerable

Childrens Resettlement Scheme, as any costs will be met by the grant paid from the Home Office.

All costs incurred in the resettlement programme to date have been covered by the Home Office grant.

5.2 **Legal Implications:**

None arising directly from this report

6. **Contribution to Council Priorities:**

The resettlement of refugees is a key delivery mechanism of the Council Plan Priority: Resilient Communities – creating sustainable communities across Craven.

7. **Risk Management:**

There are no strategic risk management issues arising from the report.

8. **Equality Analysis:**

The resettlement of refugees in the Craven district will require a full equality analysis, and it is acknowledged that there is the potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. As we intend taking a partnership approach to the issue the partnership Councils will undertake a comprehensive equality analysis which will become available in the coming months.

It will be crucial that the Council is proactive in fostering good relations between the refugees and the existing community and help them to positively integrate. A key element of the local response will be to work with local support groups and ensure close co-ordination of agencies along with a clear communications plan.

9. **Author of the Report:**

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10. **Appendices:**

Appendix 1- Migration Yorkshire proposal for Vulnerable Childrens Resettlement Programme