

AGENDA ITEM 7**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****24th SEPTEMBER 2015****THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO THE SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSON'S
RELOCATION SCHEME AND THE AFGHAN INTERPRETERS
RELOCATION SCHEME****REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES****Author: Paul Mee, Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Tel: 01443 425513****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to brief Members on two Home Office schemes; the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme and the Afghan Interpreters Relocation Scheme, and to seek Members approval to support and actively participate in both schemes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet :

- 2.1 Agree to the Council's participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme
- 2.2 Agree to the Council's participation in the Afghan Interpreters Relocation Scheme
- 2.3 Seeks the commitment of Cwm Taf University Health Board, local housing providers and the third sector to support the Council in delivering these schemes
- 2.4 Agree that the Service Director, Public Health & Protection, enters into discussions with the Home Office to determine how many individuals/families can be supported in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and
- 2.5 Agree that the Service Director, Public Health & Protection, in liaison with relevant colleagues and cabinet Member, makes whatever practical and financial arrangements are necessary to operationalise both schemes at the earliest opportunity

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The United Nations estimates that as of February 2015, 12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian aid within Syria. More than 7.6 million people have

been forced to flee their homes and there are some 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (SVPR Scheme) is a Government resettlement programme to relocate to the UK some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.

- 3.2 The Afghan Interpreters Relocation Scheme (AIR Scheme) has been in operation since April 2014 and is open to any interpreters who put themselves in physical danger working alongside British military personnel. They are eligible for resettlement in the UK if they had been working for the British military for more than 12 months at the point of redundancy. 283 people had arrived in the UK under this scheme by June 2015, across 13 local authorities in Wales (Monmouthshire CBC), England and Scotland.
- 3.3 The differences in operation of the two schemes and how they are funded are set out in this report.

4. THE SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSON'S RELOCATION SCHEME

- 4.1 The scheme will prioritise help for survivors of torture and violence, and women and children at risk or in need of medical care. This will include families (with both parents) and women and children at risk cases (single parent families, female headed). Those eligible for the scheme will bring their immediate family with them. Generally, families will comprise of 4 to 6 people.
- 4.2 Those accepted will be granted leave to remain in the UK for five years with access to employment and public funds, including benefits. At the end of five years, if they are unable to return to Syria, they may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK.
- 4.3 The Council would take the lead in working with other key local partners to ensure the provision of suitable accommodation and that the specific needs of these vulnerable individuals are met. The Council would need to ensure that partners, including the University Health Board (UHB) and local housing providers, are prepared to support the Council in delivering the scheme. The Council may choose to commission the third sector to play an important part, for example in providing an orientation package.

5. THE AFGHAN INTERPRETERS RELOCATION SCHEME

- 5.1 The National Security Council has agreed a package of measures to offer to locally engaged staff in Afghanistan who were made redundant as a result of the withdrawal of British troops. The option of relocating to the UK is offered to those who have put themselves in the most danger whilst serving Her Majesty's Government.
- 5.2 Those eligible for the scheme will be allowed to bring their immediate family with them. Applicants are well educated and come from various professional backgrounds. Those eligible will be granted leave to remain in the UK for five years and the right to work in the UK upon arrival. The applicant will be able to apply for permanent settlement after five years.

5.3 The Council would take the lead in the integration of new arrivals into their community. The UK Government will cover the costs of the first four months of support, but it will be for the Council to put in place arrangements to integrate new arrivals. This would include:

- Reception arrangements at the airport
- Four months accommodation from the date of arrival
- A minimum six month assured short hold tenancy, following the first four months (not funded)
- Weekly cash payments pending access to benefits
- Advice and assistance to cover employment welfare benefits, housing, health, education, utility support and orientation

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In respect of the SVPR Scheme the UK Government will meet the costs of accommodation and integration support and education for the first year of arrival. Staff costs for the administration of the scheme will also be considered. Funding will be based on actual spend by the Council. There will be a one off cash and clothing allowance of £200 per person; contributions towards health care costs; £4,500 per head for education costs for 5 -18 year olds (£2,250 for ages 3-5); first year adult and child social care costs; actual costs of providing one year's orientation support. This list is not definitive and the Government is open to negotiation over other funding requirements.

6.2 In respect of the AIR Scheme, the UK Government is offering a financial package to local authorities and will cover all costs incurred (including set up costs, rent and financial payments) as well as an additional integration fund ranging from £4500 per person (for families), up to £7500 per person (for single people). Weekly payments to individuals will be refunded in full.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The implications of the growing humanitarian crisis in Syria are evident across Europe. Such overwhelming human need demands a compassionate response from all levels of Government.

7.2 In participating in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, the Council would be making a practical commitment to assist some of the most vulnerable persons fleeing conflict in their country.

7.3 In participating in the Afghan Interpreters Relocation Scheme, the Council would be making a practical commitment to assist people who served with the British military at great personal risk, and who are now in need of support. The Council committed to the Armed Forces Covenant in September 2014; the principles of which recognise that in the provision of public services to the armed forces community, special consideration is appropriate in some cases. Supporting this scheme is consistent with these principles.

This page is left Blank.