

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**PARTICIPATION IN A LANCASHIRE WIDE PROGRAMME TO RESETTLE SYRIAN REFUGEES**

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PORTFOLIO	Community Services / Housing
REPORT AUTHOR	Mike Waite
TEL NO	01282 425011 ext 7198
EMAIL	mwaite@burnley.gov.uk

PURPOSE

1. To agree Burnley Council's participation in a Lancashire-wide programme to resettle Syrian refugees.

RECOMMENDATION

2. To agree to work with Lancashire County Council on a programme to resettle Syrian refugees, in line with the average number being resettled across the county.
3. To agree to develop existing partnership work with SERCO, who are responsible for a programme of dispersing asylum seekers.
4. To support LCC in a bid for government funds from the Controlling Migration Fund.
5. To delegate detailed decision making on participation in the programme and related partnership work to the Head of Corporate Engagement, in consultation with the Head of Housing and Development Control, and the Executive Member for Community Services.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

6. The recommendation is in line with the position that Burnley will play its proper and proportionate part in helping resettle refugees, and will do so as part of a co-ordinated approach across Lancashire.
7. The recommendation is made on the basis that there will be appropriate financial and practical support from government and through partner organisations, so that all proper arrangements will be put in place without the programme having any disproportionate impact on existing services.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

8. The British government has agreed to resettle a number of people who have fled the conflict in Syria, and this is now being organised through various programmes, including the Syrian Resettlement Programme and the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme.

9. In Lancashire, these programmes are being co-ordinated by Lancashire County Council, and provisional agreements have been made about the numbers of people coming to come to the county. On the basis that Burnley takes the average number being resettled across the county, the combined programmes would see five families – amounting to around fifteen or so individuals – coming to the town later this year, with additional similar numbers coming to Burnley in 2018 and 2019.
10. Burnley’s participation in the programme would be on the basis that there is a sufficient lead in time period of several months, and that financial support is provided in relation to the refugees, so that cash costs incurred in arranging accommodation; co-ordinating the programme; interpretation and translation work etc. are covered by government payment. On this basis, disproportionate and adverse impact on existing services will be avoided.
11. In addition to these programmes, SERCO are responsible for local involvement in the national asylum seeker dispersal programme. Burnley Council and other agencies have been working in support of SERCO on a pilot basis, with around twenty five asylum seekers having lived across ten properties in the borough at any one time over the last few months. It is appropriate to complement participation in the programmes to resettle refugees with the formalisation of the pilot work with SERCO, and to increase the level of participation from ten properties to twenty properties in 2017.
12. In addition to the financial support provided in relation to the refugee resettlement programme, the government has established a Controlling Migration Fund, which councils can apply to. In Lancashire, given the county-wide approach which is being taken, it is appropriate for LCC to lead on a bid. Burnley officers will support this, on the basis that an appropriate and proportionate support would come to Burnley as a result of a successful bid.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

13. Direct cash costs resulting from Burnley Council’s participation in the Syrian Resettlement Programme and Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme will be reimbursed through government funds. A successful Lancashire bid to the Controlling Migration Fund will reduce the extent to which existing officer time is spent on these programmes, and the related partnership work with SERCO.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

14. Agreement to the recommendations would establish the policy that Burnley Council participates in government determined programmes to resettle and support asylum seekers and refugees. Burnley Council does this on a proportionate basis, as part of Lancashire wide programmes, and ensuring that all proper support systems are put in place with government support, and without disproportionate impact on existing services.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

15. Partner organisations, as set out below;
Home Office
SERCO
Lancashire Constabulary
Calico
Building Bridges in Burnley.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT: Mike Waite, mwaite@burnley.gov.uk 01282 425011 ext 7198

ALSO: