

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **18th December 2019**

Report Subject: **Global resettlement Programme**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias
Head of Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
W/C 18/11/19	26/11/19	02.12.19				18/12/19		Member working group

1. **Purpose of the Report**
To seek approval for commitment to the UK Government's Global Resettlement Scheme.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 In 2015, the UK Government expanded their existing resettlement programme and made a commitment to resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees throughout the course of 5 years.
 - 2.2 Recognising the vital role in helping refugees resettle into the UK, local authorities and community partners were encouraged to support the national programme which at that stage had also gained universal backing from devolved governments. Since the resettlement programme has been in operation local authorities throughout the UK have played a critical role in helping support new arrivals rebuild their lives and resettle into Wales.
 - 2.3 In 2016, the Council approved the Authority's participation in the resettlement programme outlining a degree of commitment proportionate to the local capacity of services and in keeping with the all Wales response.
 - 2.4 In July 2017, the UK Government took the decision to expand the scope of the scheme to include not only Syrian nationals but other refugees fleeing surrounding countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.
 - 2.5 The Council also became one of the first councils in the UK to support the UK's Vulnerable Children's Relocation Programme
 - 2.6 **Global Resettlement Scheme**
The new Global Resettlement Scheme was announced by the UK Government in June 2019.

- It will aim to consolidate the existing Vulnerable person's resettlement scheme (VPRS) Vulnerable children resettlement scheme (VCRS) and the Gateway Protection Programme.
- The new programme will be simpler to operate and provide greater consistency in the way that the UK Government resettles refugees. It will broaden the geographical focus beyond the Middle East and North Africa.
- New processes for emergency resettlement will also be developed, allowing the UK to respond quickly to instances when there is a heightened need for protection, providing a faster route to resettlement where lives are at risk.
- As the UK Government's efforts in meeting their international obligations to provide humanitarian protection to those most in need continues, local authorities are being asked to indicate if they continue their commitment and participate in the Global Resettlement Scheme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

That the Executive Committee:

Option One (Preferred Option)

- Note the update on current participation;
- Approve the continued commitment of support via the Global Resettlement Scheme proportionate to local capacity of services; and
- Receive further updates of progress made under the scheme.

Option Two

- Note the update on current participation; and
- Do not approve the continued commitment of support via the Global Resettlement Scheme

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

This work supports the delivery of the Well Being Plan for the area, the Council's Corporate Plan and its community leadership role. It also supports delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

The funding arrangements that currently exist will remain in place for the future Global resettlement programme.

The first 12 months of a refugee's resettlement costs are funded by central government using the overseas aid budget (£8,500 per person plus education costs for school aged children – based on the ages of the child on arrival). The UK Government has also provided an additional £10m ESOL funding to enhance the English language skills of adults to improve their resettlement and

integration experience and employability (this equates to a one off payment to the host authority of £850 per adult over 19 years of age).

For years 2-5 of the programme funding is tapered from £5,000 per person in their second year, to £1,000 per person in year five. There is also an exceptional cases fund to assist the most vulnerable refugees. This is allocated on a case by case basis and is applied for by the host authority, this enables local authorities to support those more complex and vulnerable people as they rebuild their lives in the UK.

5.1 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There is a reputational risk to the Council if there is not a continued commitment to support the UK Government's efforts in meeting their international obligations to provide humanitarian protection to those most in need.

The commitment would continue to be proportionate to the local capacity of services to support resettlement.

5.2 ***Legal***

The UK Government works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify those most in need of support and evaluates each application to determine who would benefit most from relocation. The process ensures that the resettlement programme prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin: women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and survivors of torture and violence amongst others.

5.3 ***Human Resources***

The officer working group is chaired by the Head of Governance and Partnerships and has representation from across the Council and key partners.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Figures as of March 2019 evidences the UK has welcomed 15977 refugees (including children) from across the MENA region. 1072 refugees have relocated into Wales. All 22 authorities in Wales have received families under the scheme.

6.2 During the past 3 years Blaenau Gwent has successfully resettled 4 families from across the MENA region.

6.3 The global need for resettlement continues to grow, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimate that in 2020 more than 1.4 million refugees will need to be resettled.

7. ***Expected outcome for the public***

7.1 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The resettlement programme includes support services who work directly with the resettled families. A working group of Elected members has also been established to receive updates from the Head of Governance and Partnerships to support the Council commitment to participation in the resettlement programme.

7.2 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The ambition of Welsh Government and organisations working across Wales is to become a Nation of Sanctuary, welcoming those who are seeking sanctuary from conflict all over the world.

7.3 ***Preventative focus***

Resettlement continues to be a critical protection tool, providing a pathway to safety for refugees who can no longer remain in their host countries.

7.4 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The participating in the resettlement programmes is aided by a West Gwent regional approach to commissioning support services. This has enabled commissioning with clearer outcomes and shared learning across the three Local Authority areas. The officer working group includes key partners.

7.5 ***Integration (across service areas)***

With representation from across services areas the officer group is involved in case review prior to acceptance, to ensure that the relevant support is available and matched to anticipated need.

8. ***EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

This work positively supports people from within the protected characteristics.

9. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Case review is undertaken via the officer group. Regular monitoring arrangements of the commissioned support services are in place. Updates are provided to the Members working group and reports are presented through the democratic arrangements.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – UK Resettlement Scheme – Notes for Local Authorities



**Appendix 1 - UK
Resettlement Scheme**