



REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN RESETTLEMENT SCHEME – PROGRESS UPDATE

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1. To update CPOG on the planning for the arrival of Afghanistan Citizens to Moray.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. **Note the contents of the report**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Meeting of Moray Council on 15 September 2021 approved the recommendations from the report (appendix 1) to:
- Participate in the Afghanistan Relocation and Assistance policy (ARAP) Scheme to support Locally Employed Staff (LES) – with a maximum of supporting **10 families**
 - Participate in the National Transfer Scheme to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children with a maximum of supporting **3 children**
 - Formation of a dedicated 2-year temporary resettlement team from funds received through the Home Office
- 3.2. The Convention of Scottish Local Authority (CoSLA) are coordinating each Local Authorities responses to the participation in the variety of refugee and resettlement schemes.
- 3.3. A strategic planning team has been established with attendance from Police Scotland, UHI Moray, NHS Grampian, Department for Working Pensions, and internal departments representing, Housing, Education, Benefits, Community Support, Employability and Adult and Children's Social Work.
- 3.4. The oversight for the strategic plan is lead by Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Jane Mackie with a temporary team including:
- Project Officer – Carmen Gillies
 - Development Officer – Tracey Peden
 - Trainee Social Worker – Rebecca Macintosh

- 3.5. The strategic planning team have met twice to identify opportunities and risks associated with the arrival of Afghanistan citizens, including financial resources and availability of services within the Moray area.

4. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

- 4.1. **Recruitment of Resettlement Team** - Job descriptions have been sent for evaluation with the anticipation of recruiting a resettlement team (One Project/Resettlement Officer Grade 10 and a maximum of 3 Assistant Resettlement Officers Grade 5) week commencing 1 Nov 21
- 4.2. **Allocation of Housing** – The intention is to obtain a 2-year temporary lease for 10 MOD properties in Elgin. Moray Council (Head of Housing Edward Thomas) has received Ministerial approval to enter into a formal lease agreement. Legal are now finalising lease agreements and a new timeline will be agreed.
- 4.3. **Matching Process** – The Home Office have been struggling to match the desires of Afghan citizens with their chosen Local Authorities. As the system evolves, the matching process and the collection of accurate health and personal data is beginning to improve. This reduces the risk of families resettling in Moray with the desires to relocate to other cities and towns across the UK.
- 4.4. **Service Capacity - Education** has capacity in primary and secondary schools with the caveat of pupils attending S3, where there is no or limited spaces in the Elgin area. **Health**, specifically GP surgeries are reaching capacity, this risk can be managed by access to medical data prior to acceptance.
- 4.5. **Community Engagement and Communication** – many individuals and third sector organisations are willing to support and donate many items. To manage requests and communication, a dedicated email address has been created to direct all queries to refugeeresettlementteam@moray.gov.uk
- 4.6. **Project Plan** – The creation of a project plan has been developed in detail which can be found in Appendix 2.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. Timeline from the MOD regarding the use of housing is the priority for progression. Prior to accepting Afghan Citizens the strategic planning group will meet to agree the acceptance of the families by assessing their educational and medical needs.
- 5.2. It is anticipated that this report will require updating due to the rapid change and developments of this subject matter.

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Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-957343068-1955