



Committee report

Committee	EXECUTIVE
Date	8 SEPTEMBER 2016
Title	ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL RESPONSE TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Report to	DEPUTY LEADER AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report informs the Executive of national pressures faced by all councils, with regard to international migration and the re-settlement of refugees. It concludes with recommendations intended to ensure that the council has an effective local strategy in response to these issues.
2. The government has an expectation that all local authorities will contribute to tackling the consequences of the arrival in the UK of migrants, and the humanitarian emergency arising from conflict in Syria. Participation in these schemes will have potential impact on council services and local communities. This report refers to three principle national programmes requiring local authority involvement. The intention of these programmes is to fairly disperse asylum seekers awaiting approval to stay in the UK, and to provide a nationwide humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee emergency.

BACKGROUND

3. Europe is experiencing an unprecedented movement of people across its borders, as people seek security and refuge from violence, oppression and economic failure. The United Kingdom is a destination for many people, creating pressures at migrant arrival points. War in Syria has also led to the creation of refugee camps in neighbouring countries, where insecurity and poor living conditions have created a significant humanitarian challenge.
4. The UK government has implemented programmes that respond to these issues, as well as a desire in the UK to relieve the distress of Syrian refugees. Three current and distinctively different programmes require the co-operation of councils and local communities.

5. **Unaccompanied Children:** During 2016, the government is guiding a new Immigration Act through parliament. This act has a number of implications for people seeking to enter the UK, and sets out various measures for managing the inward flow of migrants and refugees. Included in the act are new provisions for dealing with unaccompanied migrant children arriving in the UK, those currently cared for by Kent County Council, and a commitment to find homes for 3,000 children currently residing in Syrian refugee camps.
6. **Asylum Dispersal Scheme:** In March 2016, The UK Visa and Immigration Service, a branch of the Home Office, wrote to all councils asking for greater participation in the UK asylum dispersal scheme. This resulted in a meeting between Home Office and council officers, at which the council explored the operation of the scheme and asked for assistance with addressing the local challenges that might be faced if the scheme were implemented on the Island. This scheme provides temporary accommodation and support for migrants to the UK awaiting decisions on asylum applications. Home Office contractors operating this scheme will secure private accommodation leased specifically for temporary occupation. They also provide tenants with support while awaiting their immigration decision, as during this time, migrants have no access to benefits or paid employment. Each asylum application takes on average two months, with up to a further four months if there is an appeal. The temporary resident will leave the UK, or move on having been granted asylum and licence to reside, and their accommodation will be used by another arrival.
7. This accommodation has generally been in areas with a source of affordable housing. The three main south east host communities have been Hastings, Portsmouth and Southampton. These and other host towns and cities across the UK now report that they are approaching capacity. The Home Office therefore seeks new housing markets for asylum dispersal.
8. Once the contractor has identified a potential tenancy, often an existing or new home in multiple occupation the local council is given notice of their intention, and an invitation to approve or object to the plan, or recommend restrictions. The council will need to consider a range of issues within a short response period. This can include suitability of the accommodation, impact on local community cohesion and local capacity to support migrant residents. The contractor cannot override the council's recommendation.
9. Proposed new homes of multiple occupation would be subject to the normal planning process and any other local regulatory processes. The number of local placements would be limited by the availability of affordable temporary housing, the contractor's ability to provide support, and the availability of essential public and community services. There is no direct funding from the government for councils in relation to this scheme, as users are temporary residents who are anticipated to have minimal need for services beyond the limited practical and financial support provided by the contractor. The majority of scheme users are reported by the Home Office to be single men who are not regarded as significant users of local services. However, approximately 30 per cent of placements are couples or families with children who may require temporary access to schooling and health services.

10. **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)**. In October 2015, The then Prime Minister pledged that in response to the plight of Syrian refugees, the UK would offer homes to 20,000 of the most vulnerable victims of the conflict in Syria, who reside in refugee camps in countries bordering Syria. The scheme invites local authorities to offer refuge in the UK to the most vulnerable people and families. Qualifying criteria include factors such as experience of torture and violence, intimidation, and other needs that cannot be met in refugee camps.
11. The VPRS scheme works alongside the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and international security organisations, to identify and assess the needs of the most vulnerable camp residents. People selected for re-settlement are brought to the UK and placed by councils in suitable homes, with a support package that aims to maintain the family leading to independence. The VPRS differs from other refugee scheme in that arrivals are entitled to access all public services including benefits and education, and are able to take employment. Beneficiaries are given a five year permission to reside in the UK, subject to review.
12. The government is encouraging all councils to host small numbers of people over the remaining four years of the VPRS. If reflecting the aspirations of other councils in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area, the Island might for example consider in the region of up to five families, over the remaining four years of the scheme.
13. Councils do not select arrivals. Participating councils are invited to set out the desired number and profile of arrivals (for example, small families, over 50s only etc and for the Island, this might be families or those over the age of 25 as a natural fit without the Island's demographic profile). Arrivals are subject to health and wellbeing assessments by the UNHCR, and the UK government undertakes extensive security checks.
14. Currently, of the 14 councils in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area, four have hosted refugee families, two have declined to make offers as they are participating in other arrival programmes, and five councils are assessing the implications of making an offer. Of other islands, Orkney and Bute have welcomed a small number of families in the first tranche of arrivals.
15. The council and local NHS can draw on VPRS funding to provide support for the first year of arrival. The government has also announced a further two years of tapered council funding. Beneficiaries of the scheme draw on benefits to pay rent and other living costs. Evidence from the South East Migration Partnership of similar schemes in the region, is that most families enter the local employment market soon after arrival. However, the focus of the VPRS on assisting those in most need means that some arrivals may have health, social care or education needs.

16. Scheme funding is for re-settlement support and a contribution to local public services, requiring an expert casework and co-ordination provider to be commissioned out of the funding. Their role is to create a protective and supportive network of public, voluntary, faith and other community support around the family. The casework provider welcomes arrivals, arranges translation, communication with family, access to the NHS, response in emergencies, managing expectations and introduction to the locality. The casework provider should encourage independence through access to learning English and local culture, help into education and employment, support with problem solving and engaging with the local community. There is also the possibility that wider community development may be needed if families are to thrive in their new environment, particularly where host communities may not be ready to welcome or integrate refugees from other cultures.
17. Nationally, the VPRS appears most effective where local community support is provided to welcome and sustain arrivals, for example, neighbourly welcome and support that might include building social contacts and networks, offers of learning and work, gifts of household items and practical help to integrate into British life. The council is required to secure and fit out a home for the arrivals by taking a lease on property found in the private rental market, which will be paid for by housing benefit claimed by the arrivals. Scheme funding allows for some limited payment toward voids in preparation for an arrival. The family will then claim state benefits to provide clothing, food, energy and other essentials until they are financially independent.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

18. The council's [Corporate Plan 2015-17](#) does not directly address the arrival of migrant and refugee families. However, the primary objective of refugees and refugee programmes is to provide vulnerable people with a safe and secure place to live and prosper. While in general, migration can provide challenges in terms of providing services and ensuring community cohesion, hosting small numbers of refugees and providing humanitarian assistance to families in dire circumstances underpins the council's corporate themes of:
 - keeping children safe and improving their education
 - protecting the most vulnerable with health and social care, investing in support, prevention and continuing care

CONSULTATION

19. The council has been present at a number of information-sharing opportunities provided by the South East Migration Partnership, the Home Office and other forums. Forums for sharing the experiences of other councils have included opportunities to consult with councils in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area who have hosted arrivals under the VPRS scheme, and to begin forming a better understanding of asylum dispersal.
20. The experience of other councils and similar programmes suggests that the support of community organisations and local businesses are reported by other councils to have been critical to asylum dispersal and VPRS placements. A small number of organisations from the faith, private and voluntary sectors have informally discussed with the council some involvement in refugee and humanitarian activities. These very

few contacts have indicated the possibility of greater interest but have not resulted in offers of housing, or wider support to supplement any purchased services, although for example, an offer has been made by a local language tutor to assist arrivals. There may however be as yet undiscovered sources of such support.

21. To encourage greater council participation, the government has been refining its VPRS offer to councils, and is currently promoting take-up of its new dispersal schemes for children and adults. The council has not therefore commenced a wider consultation or investigation of local support or views with respect to the programmes set out in this paper.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. The recommendation of this report, if agreed, would involve investment in officer and member time and resources. The level of investment allocated would determine the scope of the proposed strategy. Set against this cost, are the financial implications of engaging with the programmes considered here.
23. With regard to the Home Office's Asylum Dispersal scheme, there is no extra local funding for councils. Approximately 70 per cent of placements are single men. Families entering the system may require access to local schools and family services provided by the council and the NHS this may lead to some financial demand on local services depending on individual needs.
24. With regard to the VPRS and Syrian refugees, existing and past resettlement schemes provide evidence that with encouragement and support, over time, families become self-reliant and financially independent. Government funding therefore recognises the initial cost of integration and the potential for strain on local services. Table 1 sets out the full government funding offer in terms of per-person payments. Councils are accountable for all non-health benefit related funding, and choose how to allocate funding within a flexible framework, most usually by commissioning expert external providers.
25. A typical family of five (two adults and three children aged two to seven), would result for example in first year scheme payments of up to approximately £75,000, comprised of approximately £51,000 council and school funding, £12,700 benefits payment to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and up to £11,000 to the local NHS. The government has committed to funding for years 2 to 4 of re-settlement, tapering payments to reflect integration and financial independence. For the typical family referred to above, the council funding will reduce to £25,000 in year 2, tapered to £5,000 in year 4.

Table 1: First Year Unit Cost for Syrian VPRS scheme (source: HM Cabinet Office December 2015)					
	Benefit claimant	Other adults	Child age 5-18	Child age 3-4	Child age Under 3
Local authority costs (paid to council)	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520	£8,520
Education (paid to schools via council)	£0	£0	£4,500	£4,500	£0

Special educational needs (paid to council)	£0	£0	£1,000	£1,000	£0
DWP Benefits (to claimant for food, clothing, heating etc)	£12,700	£0	£0	£0	£0
Primary medical care (paid to NHS)	£200	£200	£200	£200	£200
Secondary medical care (paid to NHS)	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
TOTALS	£23,420	£10,720	£16,220	£13,970	£10,720

Source: The Cabinet Office, December 2015

26. The council would be required to secure a tenancy for the duration of the scheme that can be afforded within the local housing benefit received by the refugee family. The council is required to administer the tenancy for the duration of their occupation and arrange the commissioning of expert co-ordination and casework for the arrivals from within the scheme or other council funding.
27. There is limited evidence to indicate whether or not VPRS funding is adequate. Participating councils in Hampshire report that while the scheme funding is adequate at present, the main shortfall and barrier to placements is housing costs, which should not be supplemented by the council VPRS funding allocation. If housing costs are higher than the local housing benefit rate, the council and/or the refugee family would be expected to find the extra housing costs, which can reduce the amount left for living costs to unsustainable levels.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Making local provision for unaccompanied migrant and refugee children is a new requirement on councils arising from the Immigration Act 2016. The government will require councils to collaborate with dispersal and the placement of refugee children. The council's children's services department area is already responding to these new duties and responsibilities.
29. There is no legal requirement for council involvement in the Asylum Dispersal Scheme. The Home Office scheme provides the council with an opportunity to object to or request modification to proposed placements where there is a local case for doing so. In addition, there are limits to the kinds of local public benefits and services that the temporary migrant resident would be entitled to. The Home Office is concerned that local community cohesion is not undermined and that local services are not placed under any extra burden as a result of placements.
30. There is no legal requirement for council involvement in the VPRS. The government has made an undertaking to deliver the then Prime Minister's 2015 pledge on humanitarian relief. It has created guidance on delivery and a funding offer available to any participating council, in the form of a contract which sets out what the council must deliver. The council would be expected however, to make available to VPRS scheme arrivals the full range of services available to any resident.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

31. The council as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
32. For unaccompanied children and adult migrants who arrive without documentation, the UK has responsibilities under national and international law and treaties to provide basic care, until their asylum application has been considered. The vast majority of arrivals are destitute. This also applies to people who qualify for the UK's VPRS, although their arrival is part of a humanitarian scheme that includes a right to reside in the UK.
33. People on all of these programmes may have protected characteristics. Regardless of their residence status on arrival, councils will need to give regard to the need to prepare for the impact of arrival on the migrants and refugees, and on the host community. There is an expectation, however, that arrival in the UK ensures a level of equality and protection not available in home countries. This is known to foster high levels of gratitude among arrivals and a motivation to contribute to their new community.
34. Migrants placed in host communities as part of the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, while only placed temporarily, and with few rights of access to public benefit or support, also have protected characteristics which the Home Office contractor shares a responsibility to recognise and respond to.
35. A sample of recent arrivals in the Hampshire and Kent area under the VPRS indicates that age, disability, marriage, race, faith, and gender are all factors requiring attention. The impact of the move from insecurity and fear, to a new life in a different culture has presented challenges to these families. There is a risk that without access to supportive casework and sustained practical support, negative impact on people with protected characteristics will undermine their ability to survive in their new environment. This is also likely to be true of unaccompanied children subject to asylum applications and those who are given a right to residence.
36. Local communities that will host migrants or refugees may be affected by the arrival of what albeit are anticipated to be small numbers of people most likely to be in foster placements, houses of multiple occupation, or in family-scale homes. Arrivals may have an impact on local services such as homelessness, social care, schools and other services for children. This indicates that it is important to highlight the relatively small number of intended arrivals, which should not significantly affect mainstream council and health services unless arrival numbers increase to significant numbers. The exception to this is housing, where any reduction in the pool of housing in the local rental market that could be available to local people in need, will have a direct impact. The mitigating approach of other councils has been to seek accommodation that might not otherwise be available to local homeless people.

37. Evidence from other councils indicates a significant but unlikely risk that a very small number of arrivals will need intensive services that challenge local capacity. Demands on these services may mean a small risk that local residents with protected characteristics may have reduced access to services. The council can mitigate this by taking steps to consider objecting to or adapting requests by the asylum dispersal contractor to house temporary migrants. And by noting a lack of capacity to provide some services when creating a profile for arrivals under the VPRS programme.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

38. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by Police and Justice Act 2006) provides that: ‘...it shall be the duty of each authority ... to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour adversely affecting the environment, and substance misuse in its area’.
39. Undocumented migrants are subject to security assessment on arrival. Refugees considered for the VPRS are subject to in-camp security vetting by security services. Any persons found to represent a risk to the community would not be offered temporary accommodation or re-settlement.
40. The council and Hampshire Police have standing responsibilities through the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure social cohesion arrangements for monitoring and responding to the potential impact on community cohesion of the arrival of migrants and refugees. The responsibility is to ensure all residents can live safely and without the fear of crime, and that partners work together to increase community confidence and promote community cohesion. In order to ensure that these responsibilities are met, and to ensure that the right arrangements are being made in each case, there is a need to assess the local impact of placements with potential host communities, as not all communities might have the capacity to welcome new arrivals. This requires discussion with community leaders and organisations including local councils, faith groups and voluntary organisations with a particular interest and experience in arrivals and our local communities. This contributes to any decision on the appropriateness or sustainability of placements. To be effective, this process should take place well in advance of any request to approve an Asylum Dispersal Scheme application or to host refugee families, and may need to continue after reception.

OPTIONS

41. Option 1 - To take no action, and to respond only to statutory requirements to engage in national migrant and refugee re-settlement programmes.
42. Option 2 - To improve the council’s readiness to respond to national migration and refugee re-settlement programmes. Actions will include the following:
- (a) Noting new statutory responsibilities toward unaccompanied migrant and refugee children.
 - (b) Noting government intentions to consider accommodating temporary migrant residents on the Isle of Wight, and for the development of arrangements for responding to Home Office proposals.

- (c) An assessment of council and community capacity to participate in the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and if appropriate, develop an action plan in response.

RISK MANAGEMENT

43. The council has no recent experience of managing programmes for migrants and refugees. There is a risk that the council has inadequate knowledge to commission or deliver services effectively. There is, however, advisory support from governmental and non-governmental organisations, a range of independent organisations, and some local experience. In addition, monitoring the actions of other councils in the UK has provided insights into emerging challenges and risks.
44. **Option 1.** At present, the council has few if any statutory responsibilities toward arriving migrants and refugees. The Immigration Act will create new statutory requirements for unaccompanied children, but the council is not obliged to agree to the placement of temporary adult migrants, or to make an offer under the VPRS programme. However, should the government fail to deliver its pledges through voluntary arrangements, and believes that councils have been acting unreasonably; it may resort to a firmer approach.
45. By not having a strategy and approach to responding to requests to place dispersed temporary migrants, the council may run the risk of unmanaged or unforeseen community reaction to placements, or the financial and operational risk of unplanned demands on services.
46. Resettling migrants and refugees is an issue that has potential implications for community cohesion, and potential impact on schools, homelessness, health provision and social care. Option 1 may lead to a lack of preparedness and insight. Communities may become concerned about how important decisions are being made if the council is not seen to be acting in an informed and strategic way, and regarded as failing in its role as community leader. This could lead to consequences ranging from public frustration to more active discontent.
47. Other councils hosting asylum dispersal schemes report a threshold above which communities feel that there are too many new arrivals. This is often related to the impact of groups of young men who have little or no income and are unable to work, or a fear that local people are being denied access to services by new arrivals. This risk is less likely for families placed through the VPRS, as their ability to integrate into the local community is enhanced by the terms of the scheme and the greater potential for community support. However, there is risk of operational and reputational damage to the council and of disharmony in host communities if the council has inadequate strategic insight into public and government expectations.
48. Public support for humanitarian intervention for Syrian families is based on public support at national levels. Option 1 may result in the council being seen to ignore both this sentiment and any hidden or potential local capacity to offer help and a new home. This may lead to reputational risk unless there is an underlying assessment of local views and capacity to offer humanitarian aid.

49. **Option 2.** Permits the council to reduce the risk of acting in an informed and consistent way, based on a strategy and agreed approach toward national migrant and refugee schemes.
50. Such a strategy, based on engagement, assessment and consultation, will demonstrate community leadership and a reasonable approach to making decisions. It will provide the basis for explaining at short notice the council's judgement on requests by Home Office contractors proposing a local tenancy. This also applies to the development of any local offer under the VPRS scheme as decisions will require a clear and informed understanding of the degree of available community welcome and support for refugee families. This is critical as evidence suggests that the funding alone is not an adequate basis for providing arrivals with a successful new life.
51. Potential numbers of arrivals on the Asylum Dispersal Scheme and VPRS would be very low. However, there is a risk that some extra demand would be created for council and health services. This may be the case whatever the numbers of arrivals, as while services may be ready to absorb new users, there may also be a need for services that are not available. For example, schools may need teaching assistants with new skills, or access to help with children suffering the effects of trauma, a need for interpretation and new ways of dealing with emergencies. There is also evidence from other areas of potential impact on health services, particularly on accident and emergency services, by temporary arrivals unable to readily access primary care,
52. With respect to the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, there is no extra funding to cover extra demands or any community safety and cohesion issues that might arise, for which the council has statutory responsibilities to respond to.
53. With the VPRS, any extra demand on statutory provision is largely compensated for by the government and the ability of the council to control the numbers invited to the Island. However, the Island has little migrant infrastructure or local experience of welcoming migrants, so there may be unforeseen financial and social costs not covered by the scheme. The scheme has a focus on re-settling those in the greatest need, the impact of this focus is not yet known. However, scheme funding for councils incorporates specific funding intended to deal with possible health and other public service needs, including conflict-related conditions.
54. The most significant impact will be on housing. The Asylum Dispersal Scheme contractors may have difficulty finding suitable affordable accommodation on the Isle of Wight. If accommodation is available, the contractor may be in competition with the council and other local people.
55. Within the VPRS, there is a need to secure housing within local benefit rates. This represents a challenge to councils in the south east, including the Isle of Wight, where housing costs are high and local housing markets rarely have suitable accommodation at the housing benefit level. Councils are largely unable to use their funds to top-up housing costs, and have made this clear to the government. Using benefits to top-up can leave families with less income than needed to survive and thrive. This has led to many if not most scheme tenancies in the region arising from tenancies being offered by landlords at below market rates for reasons of altruism, faith or generosity. This housing is often not otherwise available to local people in housing need, but is released specifically for use by refugees. This can in turn shape

offers to host refugees. For example, a one bedroom home may only be suitable for an older refugee couple without children.

56. There is therefore a small risk that the council's strategy for housing local homeless people might be adversely affected by the loss of homes from the local market, equivalent to the number of families hosted. The number of local homeless families in temporary accommodation has experienced a steady increase with the number rising from 121 at the end of March 2010 to the current year's figure of 184. This is predominantly due to the lack of suitable and affordable accommodation in the private and social housing sectors. The council may therefore benefit from fully investigating any potential community capacity that might not currently be available to refugees, in order to try to identify homes that are not currently on the market and that might be made available at affordable rents.
57. Developing such a strategy will require officer time and resources, as well as collaboration from community leaders and other partners. This will add to the workload of the council, but will improve decision making on an issue with potential consequences for services and local community cohesion.

EVALUATION

58. **Option 1.** The council is required to respond to a new legal requirement to accommodate unaccompanied migrant and refugee children. The council's children's services department is already responding to these new duties and responsibilities. There is, however, no statutory responsibility to invite migrants or refugee individuals or families to the Isle of Wight.
59. The council's financial position does not allow for investment in new services or responding to the consequences of unforeseen community cohesion problems arising from migration. There is, however, a need to respond to national pressures over which the council has some control, a humanitarian desire to help those less fortunate, and the need to make informed decisions about a significant issue in which that the council lacks experience.
60. For example, in current circumstances, option 1 risks the council being unprepared to respond in an informed way should Home Office contractors plan to make placements of asylum-seeking migrants on the Isle of Wight.
61. Option 1 may also lead to missed opportunities to make informed decisions that could avoid unexpected costs or impact on local people, potentially putting local community cohesion at risk. The option may also lead to the prevention of offers of humanitarian aid where there may be minimal impact on council services and the Island, where the council is unaware of undiscovered community support and resources that could make a difference. Failing to respond may also lead to the benefits of migration, such as new skills, entrepreneurs and cultural diversity, being lost to the Island.
62. **Option 2.** The council has no recent experience of migrant or refugee programmes. The process of developing a local strategy and agreed approach will identify the most important consequences of participation in refugee and migrant programmes, leading to a rational local response that can accommodate up to five families. The council

and partners will be better informed about potential benefits, costs and risks, and be better placed to provide community leadership on a potentially rewarding but also potentially divisive and contentious issue. This will require some investment in officer and member time and resources.

63. The strategy should bring together new knowledge of the implications of involvement with migrant and refugee schemes. This can be achieved by the following:
- (a) Contacting and learning from experienced commissioners, host areas and service providers in the region (such as neighbouring councils),
 - (b) Approaching refugee organisations and other expert groups operating in the region to better understand the needs of arrivals and their impact on local communities.
64. An assessment of local capacity is needed to avoid inadvertent strains on sometimes fragile local communities. A lack of welcome may create new community pressures and needs, which won't ensure a safe or thriving environment for temporary asylum seekers or resettled refugees. There is a key role for local leaders including councillors, local councils and community voices, who can explore and represent the willingness or otherwise, as well as the capacity of local communities to welcome and sustain arrivals. As yet, this is unknown. Identifying local willingness and resources can be achieved by the following:
- (a) Inviting local community, faith, and interest groups including businesses, to express and map interest in supplementing the basic provision of government schemes, without which, placement may not be possible.
 - (b) Approaching local community leaders, town and parish councils, to map the willingness and capacity of local communities to welcome and host migrants and refugees.
 - (c) Identifying local community leaders and champions willing to assist with placements and community development.
 - (d) Convening a strategy group that brings together public sector, voluntary, faith and business organisations, to guide a local approach.
65. The readiness of local public and community services to adapt to new needs and demands can be assessed. While some schools, social care services or other community services might be well placed to welcome and support arrivals, not all will be able to adapt adequately to new needs. This may result in local pressures with negative consequences for arrivals and local service users if not managed well. Services of particular significance in this assessment include the following:
- (a) Schools, colleges, adult and family education
 - (b) Social care, mental health provision, primary health care
 - (c) Contact centres, advice services, and
 - (d) Community safety services including the police.

66. Impact on housing and its availability to local people in need is a significant concern despite the potential for very low numbers of arrivals. A strategy will enable the council to take into account local capacity and the known impact on communities, services, housing need and those being placed. The Asylum Dispersal Scheme uses the local housing market and is therefore competing for homes with local people, so the council would benefit from a strategic case for approving, rejecting or amending this scheme's tenancy proposals when asked. A strategy informed by the knowledge and expertise set out above will assist and accelerate the council's consideration of requests to place people.
67. For refugee resettlement, approaching and involving the community in a local migration strategy may result in offers of homes similar to those received by other councils; housing that would not otherwise be available to local homeless people. This would enable humanitarian offers under the VPRS scheme to be made without impact on local homeless people, while a lack of such housing would indicate that the island's housing market is not a viable place to make offers to host.
68. Option 2 ensures that the council is able to develop and maintain an informed strategy and approach to requests for involvement in national asylum and refugee programmes. Option 2 is therefore recommended as the most practical and beneficial option.

RECOMMENDATION

69. Option 2 - To improve the council's readiness to respond to national migration and refugee re-settlement programmes. Actions will include the following:
- (a) Noting new statutory responsibilities toward unaccompanied migrant and refugee children.
 - (b) Noting government intentions to consider accommodating temporary migrant residents on the Isle of Wight, and for the development of arrangements for responding to Home Office proposals, and reflect the aspirations of other councils in the region by accommodating up to five families.
 - (c) An assessment of council and community capacity to participate in the Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme and if appropriate, develop an action plan in response.

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