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**Report To:** Inverclyde Health & Social Care Committee      **Date:** 21 October 2021

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**Subject:** AFGHAN MIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Social Care Committee on the current Government refugee schemes and the HSCP participation in the Government's new arrangements for accommodating and supporting Afghan Citizens.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has previously participated in three refugee schemes run by central government through the Home Office, these are: the Afghan Relocation Scheme, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children's Scheme. The Home Office are also keen for local authorities in Scotland to participate in the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- 2.2 The Home Secretary made an announcement on 17 June 2019 to confirm the Government's ongoing commitment to resettlement, announcing plans for a new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) which was due to see thousands more refugees provided with a route to protection when it begins in 2020. The Scheme was put on hold because of the pandemic but has recently started up again. The Health and Social Care Committee gave approval in October 2020 for the Council to resume receiving families under this scheme.
- 2.3 The UK Government published new guidance which was most recently updated on 13 September 2021. The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is aligned with previous Afghan support schemes to provide one comprehensive offer to individuals, councils, and mainstream services.
- 2.4 A resettlement package has been developed to support ACRS arrivals to acclimatise to the UK, learn the language (where appropriate) and find work, thus enabling rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities within a 3 year period.
- 2.5 The core local authority tariff of support has increased from £10,500 over one year to £20,520 per person over three years enabling more sustainable support to resettled Afghans aiming to settle, integrate and become self-sufficient more quickly across the UK.
- 2.6 The UK will welcome 5,000 vulnerable Afghans in the first year and up to 20,000 in the long term.
- 2.7 Since 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 Inverclyde have received 8 families (44 individuals) to date and expect to welcome a total of 12 families (estimate of 64 individuals) by the end of October 2021. 12 families would generate grant income of £1,313,280 for Social Care, £123,750 for Education and £19,550 ESOL. This income would allow Inverclyde to progress with the appointment of the

staffing and provide the needed services to the families

- 2.8 Longer term, after a review of effective progress, the intention is to seek settlement offers for a total of 28 Afghan families by the end of March 2022. The rate at which they arrive will be determined by the Afghan families and the Home Office who allocate families to local authorities presenting offers from all over the UK. 3 year funding is available as per Appendix 1 in the private papers and is split: £2,954,880 Social Care, £267,750 Education and £46,750. A summary of expenditure can be seen in Appendix 3 in the private papers where a surplus of £1.250m is expected. Further work is required to identify further costs to reduce this. It should be noted that if Inverclyde receive less than 28 families this will reduce our overall allocation however we are confident at present we are on track for the full allocation.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Health and Social Care Committee are asked to :

- 3.1 Note the ongoing work of the Council in successfully integrating, in Inverclyde, refugees fleeing the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan including the continued resettlement of families under the new Afghan Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- 3.2 Agree the increased staffing structure of the Inverclyde New Scots Team described in this report Appendix 2 in the private papers.
- 3.3 Agree to host a civic welcome event which will commence a period of engagement and participation with New Scots Families around developing a range of interventions that will promote their integration and future contribution to Inverclyde in the long term.
- 3.4 Note that a report will be brought back providing a more detailed expenditure report in relation to supporting refugee families and unaccompanied asylum seekers in Inverclyde associated with the various government refugee funding schemes.

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Inverclyde has previously participated in three Government Resettlement Programmes, the Afghan Relocation Scheme, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement. The first Afghan families arrived in March 2015 and the first Syrian families arrived in November 2015. A Sudanese family, under the Vulnerable Children's Scheme, arrived in December 2017.
- 4.2 The UK Government launched a new relocation policy for Afghan Locally Engaged Staff (LES) in April 2021 to accelerate the relocation of these staff and their families. This followed the announcement that NATO military forces would be withdrawing from Afghanistan. This situation will lead to violence and intimidation of those Afghans who have worked for the UK and risked their lives alongside British Forces in Afghanistan over the past twenty years. The Government wrote to COSLA, Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships and Local Authorities in early June asking for assistance in providing accommodation and support for Afghan LES and their families. That scheme is now to integrate with the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) which offers increased funding and extends to three years of support rather than one.
- 4.3 Inverclyde, along with a number of other local authorities, responded positively and the first flight arrived in the UK in early July. As Afghanistan is currently on the Government's red list for travellers coming to the UK as a result of Covid, families arriving have to quarantine in a hotel for 10 days before moving to their local authority accommodation. If there is no suitable accommodation either ready or available, the families are moved to a 'holding' hotel until such time as it is. Inverclyde has currently received 8 families and has indicated that we will take 12 by the end of October 2021. This will depend on how quickly the Home Office can match appropriate families to available properties. Inverclyde notify the Home Office of the size of the properties on offer and how many family members can be accommodated and their staff have to match a suitable family for this. After reviewing our position and looking at how well the initial 12 families have settled, we have indicated that we may take up to twenty eight families in total by the end of March 2022.
- 4.4 As the position in Afghanistan changed, the Government has again written to local authorities with an urgent request for more accommodation and offers of support. There have been changes to the financial support package available in an attempt to encourage more local authorities to participate. Previously, the funding was only available for twelve months and amounted to, approximately £10,500 per person.

This has now been increased to three year's funding with £20,520 per person plus £850 per adult who requires support with English language now available. Education and health payments are also available in the intensively supported first year as shown in the table.

<b>ACRS/ARAP scheme integrated (13/09/2021).</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year3	<b>3 year total</b>
LA Tariff [per person]	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	<b>£20,520</b>
Education [per child]	Up to £4,500			<b>Up to £4,500</b>
English Language [per adult]	£850			<b>£850</b>
Health [per person]	£2,600			<b>£2,600</b>

- 4.5 The Council still has an income stream from the previous resettlement schemes to support the work of the New Scots Integration Team and has earmarked reserves from our previous work with Afghan LES and their families. The Council would also be able to attract further five year funding by implementing the decision of the Health and Social Care Committee of October 2020 by taking more families under the UK Resettlement Scheme.

- 4.6 A bid to the Scottish government for a New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project Grant was successful as recently as 13 August 2021.
- 4.7 The bid, made in partnership by Inverclyde CLD (Community Learning and Development) and the Inverclyde new Scots Integration Team, awarded £87,024 to enable our New Scots Get Connected project to take place. The project will deliver an induction programme to support New Scots to learn English and build social connections with the wider community following their arrival in Inverclyde and will help achieve the outcomes required by the Home Office of us in supporting new refugees.
- 4.8 Education support has been in place for refugee families arriving in Inverclyde, funded by the various resettlement schemes, for a number of years. Inverclyde's newly arrived Afghan families tend to have three children and therefore significant Education support has been accounted for from earmarked reserves and future income, to be claimed as families arrive . The funding will sustain 6 EAL (English as an Additional Language) posts over the next two years. Under the Funding package Education are entitled to £267,750 over the next 2 years and £46,750 ESOL costs as per Appendix 1. This funding will be passed to Education and partnership working via the multi-agency New Scots Steering Group will continue to consider the education needs of the children as they settle in their new country.
- 4.9 For comparative purposes, contact was made with Renfrewshire Council to look at the size and structure of their Refugee support team which is as follows:
- 1 Team co-ordinator, 3 Integration Support Officers, 1 Welfare Rights Officer, 1 Business support/finance officer.
- Overall Renfrewshire currently have 5 more families (42 total compared to 37) but less people as they only ever take families of four.
- Inverclyde's team has 1 Team coordinator, 2 Integration support officers so is clearly under resourced in comparison to Renfrewshire's team given their similar workload. Each family on arrival should be allocated a caseworker and increasing the capacity of the team would enable the service to effectively manage this.
- 4.10 The suggested composition of the Inverclyde New Scots Team would be 1 New Scots Team lead, 1 New Scots Integration Coordinator, 4 New Scots Integration Officers, 1 Children's Support Officer, 1 Business support Officer and 0.5 Welfare Rights Officer.
- The costs to achieve this structure for a year would be £213,105 (see appendix for detail) on current grades and includes a training budget which recognises the need to train the staff in Welfare Rights skills. It should be noted that it has been agreed that Welfare Rights Officer time will continue to be made available to the New Scots Team from Strategy and Support Services as required until the team are fully proficient in this area.
- 4.11 The service seeks to recruit the Team Lead post on a permanent basis given the current challenges in recruitment and retention across children and families service and for the additional posts to be on a an initial fixed term 4 year contract. This would allow some consistency in managing the service taking account of future demands associated with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other resettlement scheme whilst allowing review of the structure to ensure it adapts to future need.
- 4.12 There are no cost implications for the Council as all of the Finance derives from the Home Office grant.
- 4.13 Moving forward the service aims to build on existing successful models of participation and engagement developed within children services such as Proud2Care. This will enable service delivery be informed by refugee families taking a whole system approach that will contribute towards the aim of resettlement and integration in Inverclyde. Facilitating a civic welcome to the new families would provide the platform to progress this level of engagement.
- 4.14 The successful integration of Afghan families will enable to Inverclyde to develop as a diverse

multi-cultural community with potential for long term population growth and sustainability. Families who arrive bring with them a range of skills and we are beginning to see the benefit of this from families who have settled and have gone on to set up local businesses.

## **5.0 Proposals**

- 5.1 New full time temporary posts be established to manage the rapid increase in workload required to effectively integrate the Afghan new arrivals and meet the objectives set out by the Home Office Funding Instruction 2021/2022.
- 5.2 That staffing arrangements are reviewed bi-annually or as funding changes are announced by the Home Office.
- 5.3 5 New posts, over and above the current team compliment, will include (see appendix for further detail)
  - i. 1 Team lead,
  - ii. 2 New Scots Integration support officers
  - iii. 1 Children's Support officer
  - iv. 1 Business/Finance Technician
  - v. 0.5 Welfare Rights Officer
- 5.4 Funding of 5.5 additional EAL posts (see appendix 2) will be maintained by the financial support claimed from the Home Office in respect of newly arrived Afghan families.
- 5.5 That a Welcoming New Scots event be held at the Beacon Arts Centre (prospective date Friday 19 November 2021) which is co-designed by resettled and newly arrived New Scots and our steering group partnership, giving voice to and celebrating our New Scots.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Finance**

- 6.2 Total Social Care Funding of £2,954,880 is expected for 28 families over the next 3 years from the Afghan LES Relocation Scheme. Education is due a total of £267,750 and a further £46,750 for ASOL for the 28 families.
- 6.3 The cost of the Social Care proposed structure is £242,475 per annum (see appendix 2) and can thus be fully funded from this income in 2021-22.
- 6.4 Detailed spending plans for the remainder of the funding are being developed as funding instructions are updated by the Home Office (as per their 13 September announcement of scheme changes) which will include typical profiles of family expenditure and integration support for families involved in the resettlement scheme. Progress to date can be noted in appendix 3. At present if staffing costs are continued beyond the current 2 year request to the end of the funding package, it is estimated that there would be a surplus of £1.566m. This needs further review and additional ongoing family support costs require to be identifying to reduce this surplus further. The current 12 families would generate grant income of £1,313,280 for Social Care, £123,750 for Education and £19,550 ESOL. This income would allow Inverclyde to progress with the appointment of the staffing and provide the needed services to the families

It needs to be noted that any unspent funds for the Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme will need to be returned to the Home Office if not fully utilised.

### **6.5 Financial Implications:**

One off Costs.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A		2021-25	336 (336)		Family Payments Home Officer Income

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Refugees	Employee Costs	2021-2025	1,058		Yearly Staffing costs, Advice Support, Tutors and Interpreters.
	Income		(1,058)		Income from Home Office

**Legal**

- 6.6 Strict adherence to the funding instructions provided by the Home Office must be maintained.

**Human Resources**

- 6.7 Given new posts are proposed, Request to Evaluate forms will be provided to HR. New job descriptions and Person specifications are being prepared.

**Equalities**

- 6.8 Equalities

- (a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

X	YES - The Home Office provided equality impact assessment will be incorporated by Inverclyde to ensure compliance with public sector equality duties.
	NO

- (b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

- (c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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X	NO
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## **Repopulation**

6.9 In offering resettlement opportunities to Afghan families, all of which have children and, supporting them to integrate successfully into Inverclyde communities the New Scots resettlement initiatives actively contribute to local repopulation aims.

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners: Inverclyde CVS, Your Voice and the Trust, Newly arrived Afghan citizens (re the welcoming event), Education officer (Michael Roach), Finance Officer (Craig Given).

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Health and Social Care Committee 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

8.2 

- Home Office equality Impact Assessment found at this link:  
[HO Equality Impact Assessment](#)