

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Communities)	Date of Meeting:	27 June 2023
Subject:	Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People – Migration update	Wards Affected:	All
Report of:	Assistant Director of People (Communities)		
Is this a Key Decision?	No	Is it included in the Forward Plan?	No
Exempt/Confidential	No		

Purpose/Summary

To update on the recent changes migration related schemes following the final report of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group that was submitted in September 2022.

Recommendations: That

- (1) The report updating the recent changes to schemes be noted; and
- (2) That any other changes in future will be provided in additional updates.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with a Council resolution to update the Committee on the implementation of recommendations contained in the Working Group's previous report in September 2022.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to be updated on the new and existing migration and resettlement schemes.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial	
Legal: Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	
Human Resources	
Equality	
1. No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact on Children and Young People: Children, Young People and Families that arrive in Sefton through resettlement schemes are supported to access health and education services. Families receive support to help them build a new life in the borough and are supported to help them integrate into the community. Multi-agency networks are in place to ensure that all children are offered the support they need.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: The aim of the Working Group was to review the topic of housing support services provided to vulnerable people by non-governmental organisations and charities and their links to statutory agencies covered by the Communities and Housing portfolio. The Working Group focused on asylum seekers and refugees who are some of the most vulnerable people in Sefton's communities. A recommendation of the Working Group aims to ensure that any support services that are commissioned by the Council to support vulnerable households should be tailored to the target group with specialist provision and the ability to flex up and flex down as and when required. This approach will continue as part of the delivery of the listed schemes below.</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Council officers from Community Safety, Housing and Investment and Migration service areas, as well as other community partners, work with the police to prevent such as instances of crime, including hate crime, anti-social behaviour and any community tensions. This work is imperative when considering future asylum accommodation procurement.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services: Recommendations within the Final Report relate to when commissioning specific housing and support services for vulnerable groups, the Council should continue to adopt a strategic approach that is cognisant of other such services, the capacity of wider statutory, community and</p>

<p>voluntary services and reflects; that any support services that are commissioned by the Council to support vulnerable households should be tailored to the target group with specialist provision and the ability to flex up and flex down as and when required. Local, Sefton based services, often run by the Community and Voluntary sector based in our communities should always be the preferred option wherever possible. The longer-term aim of self-reliance for the service user and longer-term sustainability of the project should always be the aim with a focus on reducing demand on demand-led services issues at a local community level within each ward as to the location of the housing element, and that where housing and support services that are not commissioned by the Council fail then officers should use the governance structures in place to escalate issues. This approach will continue as part of the delivery of the listed schemes below.</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: Information as contained in “Facilitate confident and resilient communities” section above</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: None directly associated with this report</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly associated with this report</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment: None directly associated with this report</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener: None directly associated with this report</p>

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7269/23) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer has been consulted and notes that there are no direct legal implications arising from this report (LD5469/23).

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the meeting.

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

At its meeting held on 5 November 2019 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) approved the establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People. A key element was set out in the of reference as:

This is a wide-ranging topic and will include looking at accommodation and support services provided to Asylum Seekers, Syrian Refugees, those fleeing domestic violence and vulnerable homeless households. The terms of reference and objectives of the Working Group are:

- *The collation of information on the scale and location in Sefton of supported accommodation for vulnerable people that fall under the remit of the Communities and Housing portfolio*
- *How do we ensure that such services provided to vulnerable people are regulated and are being delivered in accordance with contract specification.*

Accordingly, the Working Group met on six occasions to undertake such review and its Final Report, together with associated recommendations can be accessed using the following link:

[Sefton Home](#)

Several outcomes were achieved as result of the Working Group, one of which included providing a 6 monthly update.

This update focuses on different schemes that have been introduced to support the refugee and asylum seeker populations.

Migration Related Programmes

The programmes listed below are predominately provided by the Home Office. Where Sefton is eligible for funding

1. **Local Authority Housing Fund** – Sefton was not in scope for the first round of this funding. However, there is a second round of funding which Sefton is eligible for and officers are currently working to collate the necessary information ready to submit the application in July 2023.

The purpose of this fund is to support the resettlement of refugees under the Home Office's Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Funding can be used to provide new accommodation, either permanent or temporary, to this cohort.

2. **Caseworker and relocation support funding** – This is new funding for local authority areas that have bridging hotels in their communities.

Sefton is not in scope for this funding as there are no such hotels in the borough.

3. **Find your own accommodation (FYOA) pathway** – This is designed to help Afghan households in bridging hotels to find accommodation. With bridging hotels due to be closed by the end of the year, other LAs may look to support households to move to other areas of the country.

Sefton has 'opted in' to this pathway. By opting into the pathway, other LAs are required to notify us if they are supporting a household to move to Sefton. In this

scenario Sefton would receive a tariff (per person) over 3 years to support integration. Additional funding is available for education, ESOL, healthcare.

4. **Flexible Housing Fund**– This is new funding. Where a household is supported to provide settled accommodation, local authorities can claim funding (per person) retrospectively. Funding can be used to including as capital for renovations or stock acquisition, or revenue for landlord incentives, deposits, rent top ups and furniture costs. Eligible for ARAP and ACRS families.
5. **Exceptional costs** – LAs can claim against this fund if there are exceptional costs when supporting refugees into settled accommodation. These claims have to be signed off by the Home Office and include:
 - a. Property Adaptations
 - b. Property Void Costs
 - c. Support for children with identified educational needs
 - d. Social Care provision
 - e. Universal Credit nominal top-up
6. **Homelessness Assistance Fixed Tariff** – This is new funding (per household) where Council's accept homelessness duties for households leaving bridging hotels.
7. **Temporary Integration Tariff** – This is new funding (per person per day) linked to above (6.) for a period of 6 months if temporary accommodation is required.
8. **Homes for Ukraine** – The Homes for Ukraine programme is established and although there are few new arrivals to Sefton currently the population of refugees are settled. Some have begun to find work and their own premises and are living independently.