



**Clackmannanshire  
Council**

www.clacksweb.org.uk

**THIS PAPER RELATES TO  
ITEM 3 (iii)  
ON THE AGENDA**

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING of the CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL held within the Council Chamber, Patons Building, Kilncraigs, ALLOA, FK10 1EB, on THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 at 9.00 am.**

**PRESENT**

Provost Tina Murphy (In the Chair)  
Councillor Donald Balsillie  
Councillor Janet Cadenhead  
Councillor Alastair Campbell  
Councillor Archie Drummond  
Councillor Kenneth Earle  
Councillor Ellen Forson  
Councillor Irene Hamilton  
Councillor Craig Holden  
Councillor Kathleen Martin  
Councillor George Matchett, QPM  
Councillor Walter McAdam  
Councillor Bobby McGill  
Councillor Les Sharp  
Councillor Jim Stalker  
Councillor Derek Stewart  
Councillor Graham Watt  
Councillor Gary Womersley

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Elaine McPherson, Chief Executive  
Nikki Bridle, Depute Chief Executive  
Ahsan Khan, Head of Housing and Community Safety  
Gordon McNeil, Head of Development and Environment (9.15am)  
Val de Souza, Head of Social Services  
Kevin Kelman, Assistant Head of Education  
Andrew Wyse, Team Leader, Legal Services (Clerk to the Council)  
Gillian White, Business Support to the Council - Minutes

**CC.339            APOLOGIES**

None.

**CC.340            DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

The Provost advised that the Special Meeting had been called under Standing Order 6.5 to consider and agree the Council's response to letter from CoSLA inviting the Council to actively consider becoming involved in re-settling refugees affected by the current crisis and to provide an early indication of how many people the Council may be able to accommodate.

## **CC.341 REFUGEE CRISIS AND SYRIAN RESETTLEMENT SCHEME**

The report, submitted by the Head of Housing and Community Safety, sought to enable the Council to agree its response to a letter from CoSLA regarding involvement in the Refugee Crisis and Syrian Resettlement Scheme. The letter from CoSLA was received on 7 September 2015 from Mhoraig Green, Policy Manger, CoSLA - Migration, Population and Diversity.

The Head of Housing and Community Safety had been identified as the Council's Lead Officer for this matter and he provided a verbal report at the Special meeting on the considerations for the Council raised by the letter from CoSLA and set out potential options for Council to facilitate the Council's response to the request from CoSLA.

The verbal report referred to the UK Government's commitment to re-settle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, the proportionate share of which for Scotland would be around 2,000, although Scottish sources considered it right to take more refugees than would represent a fair share of that number. An operational task force had been established to co-ordinate Scotland's practical response to this crisis, supported by a million pounds of extra Scottish Government funding.

There being extremely limited information on what the Council can do at present to assist the UK and Scottish Governments, it would be of limited benefit for services to do detailed planning without clarity of what might be required. Refugees would be from different cultures, religions, ethnic backgrounds and a mix of age, health, skills and abilities all of which may or may not impact on how services can assist. All Chief Officers are very clear that Clackmannanshire has the capacity and willingness to welcome refugees, and to help them as far as possible to become successful Scottish citizens.

Background demographic data provided to the Meeting demonstrated that Clackmannanshire could actually benefit from seeing an increase in population under retirement age.

A public housing requirement will be generated at least initially to help people with resettling and the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners have all confirmed their willingness to look at helping to house refugees. A specific proposal was being investigated with an RSL to increase the availability of temporary short term accommodation should that be required. In summary, a small increase in the numbers of people looking to be housed in Clackmannanshire, particularly if phased over more than one year, would have a limited impact on the waiting list. Any particular needs of new tenants can be accommodated within our resources

The Education Service has identified a number of primary and secondary schools with capacity for additional pupils. Language support would be available for children and adults through existing channels and broader support for particular needs could be provided through Educational Psychology Service and the Clackmannanshire Schools Support Service

Employability support would also be available for young people in the transition phase and through community based access to youth groups supporting their integration.

There is already a national healthcare framework in place for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme.

A key issue for Clackmannanshire may be pressure on GP surgeries, but that can be addressed by housing people in appropriate locations. There may be some pressure on specialist services, but that could or should be catered for in the existing national scheme.

The individual needs of potential settlers may cause additional financial pressures for certain services, but appropriate governance would be sought from the Council if additional resources were required.

Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface have responded very positively and have asked all their members to join with them to welcome refugees from Syria and other countries into Clackmannanshire. All third sector providers have also been asked to fill in a short survey to set out what they can do to help settlers in this area and that will be extremely useful when the Council comes to plan in detail.

The Clackmannanshire Area Commander has confirmed that Police Scotland is willing to support local authorities in any way it can and will attend to offer advice and support to any multi-agency groups that are required. Inevitably the Council that will require to support and co-ordinate such a multi-agency response. A communication strategy is also being developed to ensure that there is a clear and consistent message about the Council's positive approach and the messages it wishes to give locally. A considerable amount of work is going on to develop a communications strategy and to support the humanitarian effort to welcome refugees into Clackmannanshire.

### **Motion**

That the Council agrees:

1. To note the letter from CoSLA; and
2. that, having considered the options available to it as set out in the report provided to the meeting by officers, the Council's response to CoSLA reflects the information provided in the verbal report from the Head of Housing and Community Safety.

Moved by Councillor Les Sharp. Seconded by Councillor Donald Balsillie.

### **Decision**

The Council unanimously agreed:

1. To note the letter from CoSLA;
2. Having considered the options available to it in light of the report provided to the meeting by officers; that the terms of the Council's response to CoSLA will reflect the information provided in the verbal report from the Head of Housing and Community Safety.

### **Action**

Head of Housing and Community Safety

Ends 1130 hrs

