

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

DECISION NO:

19/00073

For publication

**Subject:** Proposed Commissioning of Refugee Resettlement Support in Kent

**Decision:**

**As Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education I agree to:**

- (i) Commission via a competitive tender the refugee resettlement support service in Kent, and
- (ii) To delegate decisions about the commissioning process and the implementation of the new contracts to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

Following discussions in 2015/16 with all district housing authorities and within Kent County Council (KCC), it was agreed that KCC would coordinate the support provision for refugees resettled in Kent under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, with the exception of those to be settled in Ashford and Canterbury.

In order to respond in a timely manner to the need to resettle refugee families, KCC entered into grant agreements with providers that were able to provide the required support. It has been decided that the resettlement casework support provided to individual families and the property set-up aspects of the scheme should now be formally commissioned in order to put the requirements of the scheme on a firm contractual basis, to give all potential providers the opportunity to bid and to ensure the specification covers all current and future refugee resettlement schemes.

At present the service is solely focused on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS). However, it is the intention to include in the tender the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (almost identical to the VPRS) for arrivals up to Spring 2020 and from then the new UK Resettlement Scheme which will absorb and extend the existing resettlement schemes going forward. Any future similarly arranged and funded schemes will also be covered by the tender. The proposed contract with providers will allow additional local authorities to be added if needed.

It is the intention to retain within KCC the coordination and management of the scheme and for the district housing authorities to remain, as now, responsible for decisions on the number of refugee families to be resettled and for the housing to be used.

**Financial Implications:**

The value of the contract across all providers (based on existing families and expected arrivals up to April 2020) is likely to be in the region of £1.5 to £2 million, with the possibility of an increased value of about £0.5 – £0.7 million for every ten new families resettled after April 2020, each of whom will then be supported for up to 5 years. This will be entirely funded by a secure ring-fenced Government grant that is attached to each individual refugee for the 5 years that they are supported under the scheme. The default position is for the Government funding to be provided to the responsible district housing authorities but within Kent this is now administered and managed by KCC on their behalf.

There is no call on KCC or district main budgets and to date (since the beginning of the scheme in Kent in December 2015) spending on the scheme has not exceeded the available funds. It appears in the KCC Budget as a “net nil” budget.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

Ms Grosskopf (Refugee Resettlement Programme Manager, Strategic and Corporate Services) and Ms Holden (Head of Strategic Commissioning) were in attendance for this item

(1) Ms Grosskopf introduced the report which concerned proposals to externally commission the majority of the resettlement support (including the property set-up elements) of refugee resettlement in Kent.

a) In response to a question, Ms Grosskopf confirmed that the secure ring-fenced Government grant that was attached to each individual refugee was paid in three instalments throughout the year.

(2) It was proposed and agreed by the Committee that point (ii) of the recommendation be amended from ‘To delegate decisions about the commissioning process and the implementation of the new contracts to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education’ to ‘To delegate decisions about the commissioning process and the implementation of the new contracts to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education’.

(3) RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education to:

(i) Commission via a competitive tender the refugee resettlement support service in Kent; and

(ii) To delegate decisions about the commissioning process and the implementation of the new contracts to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education,

**Alternatives considered:** The options considered for the delivery of the resettlement support included to maintain the status quo (that is to continue to use the existing three providers and to pay them via annual grants), to provide the support from an in-house KCC team, to devolve the responsibility and budget back to the districts or to externally commission the support (either via one external provider for the whole of Kent, via a Dynamic Purchasing System or via a Framework Contract with Lots according to geographical area).

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None



16 October 2019

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Signed

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Date